

Turkish troops kill 39 rebel Kurds

ANKARA (AFP) — Security forces killed 39 Kurdish separatists in weekend fighting in Turkey's troubled southeast, government officials said Monday. Army troops killed 37 members of the outlawed Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) in fighting in a rugged area in the province of Hakkari where Turkish, Iraqi and Iranian borders converge, the southeast's regional governorship said in a statement. Eleven troops were injured in the clash. Two PKK members were killed in another clash with government-paid Kurdish guards in the province of Diyarbakir. More than 25,000 people, including rebels, troops and civilians, have been killed in PKK-related violence in southeast Turkey since in 1984 when the group launched its armed campaign for a Kurdish homeland.

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PNA, Israel and CIA meet on security; Arafat welcomes EU terrorism expert

Palestinians demonstrate in Ramallah, Gaza

By Elias M. Zamaniri
and Combined agency
dispatches

DURING HIS meeting with European Union (EU) envoy to the Middle East Miguel Moratinos, Monday morning, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat agreed to have an EU anti-terror expert come and help the Palestinian security branches in their fight against "terrorism."

"We will welcome the European expert in the framework of European-Palestinian cooperation, which concerns not only security issues but is also political and economic," said Nabil Abu Rudeina, a close aide to Mr. Arafat.

Mr. Abu Rudeina had earlier dismissed the offer by Moratinos of help in the battle against terrorism, snapping, "We do not need any assistance."

But he later clarified his statement as intending to stress that the PNA was already fulfilling its obligation to Israel to crack down on militants and not as closing the door to the European expert.

Mr. Moratinos made the offer of "special assistance to fight terrorism" during a 30-minute meeting with Mr. Arafat which coincided with a new U.S. mission to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

The Swedish expert, identified by Mr. Moratinos only as Mr. Erikson, was scheduled to arrive in the region late Monday.

Earlier, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) had accepted to revive the security coordination with Israel but demanded that U.S. representatives attend all sessions as "witnesses" to prove that Israeli allegations on security against the PNA have nothing to justify.

An aide to the Palestinian president told the Jordan Times Monday that Mr. Arafat had insisted in his meetings with U.S. special Envoy to the Middle East, Dennis Ross, that Israel lift the closure on the Palestinian territories and cancel all measures it took lately against the PNA in order to help create the atmosphere necessary before security coordination be renewed.

"President Arafat is still insisting that punitive measures against the Palestinian population must first be lifted for talks to proceed and he is seeking CIA representation in the security coordination to serve as a witness and forestall Israeli charges of inactivity," he said.

The aide expressed hopes that "positive results" would come out of tomorrow's meeting in Aqaba between His Majesty King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "We know it is difficult to take Netanyahu's statements for granted, yet we wish Jordan the best of luck in obtaining a clear pledge from Netanyahu to ease the measures his government took after the market explosion," Mr. Arafat's aide, who wished to remain anonymous, said.

He noted that last week, during the visit by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Mr. Netanyahu could make no promises other than "vague statements on humanitarian gestures which were not even carried out."

Mr. Ross succeeded in organizing an overnight meeting between Mr. Arafat and top Israeli security officials to discuss Israeli complaints that the PNA was not living up to its commitment to crack down on armed anti-Israeli militants.

Israel has made such security cooperation its central condition for resuming peace negotiations and lifting harsh sanctions imposed on Palestinian areas following the double suicide bombing in Jerusalem on July 30 which killed 15 people.

But Mr. Netanyahu's aide Danny Naveh said the overnight talks were not sufficient and insisted Mr. Arafat take concrete action against militants held responsible for anti-Israeli attacks.

Speaking of the late night meeting he attended with Mr. Arafat along with CIA representatives and head of the Israeli General Security Services, Ami Ayalon.

Mr. Ross said the meeting formed a step in the right direction toward the revival of the security coordination.

In addition, Mr. Ross rounded up his second day of shuttle diplomacy in meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his foreign minister, David Levy, and his defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai.

Mr. Ross also met with Ambassador Mohammad Bassiouni of Egypt, which is also helping mediate in



A Palestinian rolls a large tyre onto another burning truck tyre Monday when a large Palestinian march protesting the Israeli-imposed closure on Ramallah neared an Israeli checkpoint on the outskirts of town (Reuters photo)

Hamas warns of in-house violence if Arafat cracks down on Islamists

AMMAN (AFP) — Hamas warned Monday that a crackdown on Islamists by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat could spark violence pitting Palestinians against Palestinians.

"If The Palestinian [National] Authority leads a campaign of arrests against Islamists and other Palestinian opponents as demanded by the Israel government, the situation will become explosive," said Hamas spokesman Ibrahim Ghosheh, who lives in Jordan.

"We hope that Arafat does not bow to the Israeli

demands. But if he does, that will ignite the fire and the situation could become uncontrollable," Mr. Ghosheh said.

"[Hamas] always wanted to avoid conflicts between Palestinians to give priority to the battle against the Israeli occupier," Mr. Ghosheh said. "[But] in the Palestinian people's current state of frustration it is difficult to say how far Palestinian anger will go."

He said that according to his information Mr. Arafat had provided Israel with a list of 30 people Israel wants handed over and the names of another

150 it wants arrested.

Mr. Ghosheh said Mr. Arafat was trying to present the arrests as measures "to protect Palestinians against the settlers," as he did in March 1996 when 1,500 Palestinian militants were put under lock and key under the pretext of protecting them.

He said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was now in a "critical situation" and that the U.S. wanted to help him by obtaining Palestinian National Authority security cooperation.

the crisis, Israel Radio said that he also discussed his mission by telephone with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa.

Finally Mr. Ross was due to meet with his European Union counterpart, Mr. Moratinos, who was also shuttling between Israelis and Palestinians in search of a formula for reviving peace negotiations.

Mr. Ross met twice on Sunday with both Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat in a bid to renew security cooperation between the two sides in the fight against extremist violence.

State Department

(Continued on page 3)

Amnesty blasts Israel for banning access to jail in southern Lebanon

NABATIYEH (AFP) — Amnesty International (AI) blasted Israel Monday for refusing to allow its officials access to a jail in south Lebanon where the human rights group claims Lebanese prisoners are being tortured.

"It seems that there is something happening in the Khiam jail which Israel wants to hide. Torture is still ongoing there," Serge Thibodeau, representative of the Canadian branch of the London-based Human Rights Group, told Agence France Presse (AFP).

Israeli forces at the Kfar Tebni passageway leading into the Jewish state's self-declared "security zone" in south Lebanon, banned Mr. Thibodeau and another Amnesty representative, Josee Lambert, from crossing into the occupied zone.

"Israel prevented us from crossing Kfar Tebni to ban us access into Khiam," Mr. Thibodeau said.

The AI officials later returned to the town of Nabatiyeh in south Lebanon where they held a sit-in at

'Vampire of Tehran' to hang in public

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iranian cab driver dubbed the "Vampire of Tehran" is to be hanged in public Wednesday for raping and murdering 11 women.

The supreme court gave final approval Monday to the public execution of Gholam Reza Kordieh, 28, after his conviction a week ago, state radio reported.

He will be whipped and then hanged from a crane near the scene of his crimes for the February to June 1997 slaying spree.

Kordieh, comes from Ghotshan in northeastern Iran, confessed to police to murdering at least nine women but he pleaded innocent in court last

week during a session which the victims' families attended.

In his confession, published Saturday by the press, the cab driver said he went out hunting for victims once a week in his taxi.

After kidnapping, raping and killing the women, he burned their bodies to make identification difficult.

The victims' families had demanded that he be stoned to death.

Tehran police said Kordieh was first arrested in 1993 for kidnapping and raping a girl, but escaped while he was being taken to court.

Israeli court indicts two Lebanese

TEL AVIV (R) — Two Lebanese men have been indicted by an Israeli court on charges of passing information to the enemy, Israeli security sources said Sunday. The sources said the court had slapped a gag order on all details of the case other than the fact that the two had been brought to Israel from Lebanon by Israel's Shin Bet secret police and that they had been indicted. Israel carved out a 15-kilometre-wide south Lebanon occupation zone in 1985 to protect its northern communities against guerrilla attack. It patrols the zone alongside the pro-Israeli South Lebanon Army. The pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) is fighting to oust Israel from the occupation zone.

King Hussein: Nation's youth deserve all support

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein Monday pledged to pursue efforts in serving the Jordanian people as well as the Arab Nation as a whole. In a statement to Radio Jordan, broadcast on the anniversary of King Hussein's 45th accession to the Throne, the King affirmed that it is the nation's youth who represent the future, and that they deserve all possible support from the Jordanian community. He expressed hope that these young people will be pioneers in their work for the good of their country. King Hussein maintained his determination to dedicate his time and effort supporting younger generations so that they can fulfil the nation's aspirations. He expressed absolute confidence in the young, that they will help their country overcome challenges and achieve national goals.



Hariri, Arafat engage in war of words over Israeli attacks

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Palestinian and Lebanese leaders became embroiled in a war of words Monday over who was responsible for last month's Jerusalem suicide bombing and Friday's rocket attack into northern Israel.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri accused Palestinian President Yasser Arafat of unjustly implicating his country in the suicide bombing which killed 16

people, and blamed the Palestinians for firing the rockets into Israel — allegations the Palestinians later vehemently denied.

Mr. Arafat had told Israeli television Friday that the two bombers, who killed 14 Israelis in the July 30 blast, "came from foreign countries and not the [Palestinian] territories. It was an Israeli security official who told us that, and that it is

(Continued on page 3)

Woman gives birth at Israeli roadblock

QIBYA, West Bank (AFP) — A 19-year-old Palestinian woman gave birth Monday at an Israeli military roadblock when soldiers refused to let her enter Ramallah to go to the hospital, family and witnesses told Agence France Presse (AFP).

Zaya Harb gave birth to a baby boy, Raieeb, who is doing well, the father, Mohammad Harb, said.

"My wife began having labour pains this morning. My father and mother accompanied her on foot until the main road, where a car was stopped to take her to Ramallah," he said.

Israeli soldiers at the Betunia roadblock at the entrance to Ramallah refused to let the vehicle through, its driver, Ibrahim Saleh, said.

Mr. Saleh said he picked up Zaya and her in-laws and drove until they "reached the Israeli checkpoint, but the soldier did not want to let us pass. The girl began to shout, then the baby appeared."

"Her mother-in-law made me move the car to the shoulder and then helped her finish having the baby," Mr. Saleh said.

"Thank God, by luck, photographers and cameramen were passing by, and they began taking pictures. Then we were able to go in to see a doctor in Ramallah," he said.

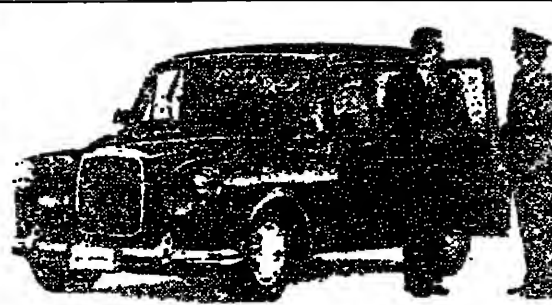
A spokesman for the Israeli military administration on the West Bank told AFP that he would have to verify the report but said that if it was true, the soldiers' behaviour was "outrageous."



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U.S. special envoy Dennis Ross (left) listens Sunday as Palestinian President Yasser Arafat delivers a statement after their meeting for some 3-1/2 hours (Reuters photo)

Biltaji inspects restoration work on Irbid museum

IRBID (J.T.) — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji Monday inspected ongoing restoration work at the Irbid National Museum and pledged the allocation of necessary funds to accelerate the project's completion.

Mr. Biltaji affirmed that his ministry will also develop a timetable to refurbish the building which houses the museum and which, under Ottoman rule, served as a police station.

Also Monday, the minister visited the archaeological site of Um Qais and announced a Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities plan to restore the Kingdom's archaeological sites.

In an interview with Al Arab Al Yawm Arabic daily Monday, Mr. Biltaji described the Kingdom as lacking high-quality standard museums, but stated his ministry's intent to improve the situation.

According to the minister, the Amman Municipality has granted a plot of land to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities for the creation of a national museum.

He stated that his ministry, in conjunction with the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, hopes that the project will attract visitors.

"I regret to say that we have not yet succeeded in developing an integrated plan for marketing Jordan abroad, but we hope to achieve that goal with the help of a special committee, grouping the public and private sectors," he said.

The committee is expected to finalise its work next week but the ministry still awaits funds from the government, the Jordan Hotels Association and the tourism sector to help activate the committee's ideas, the minister maintained.

Mr. Biltaji stated his expectation that over \$500

million would be invested north of Aqaba within the coming five years, of which 20 per cent would be investments from the Arab World.

As Aqaba is close to Saudi Arabia, Israel as it is to Petra and Wadi Rum, the city is expected to benefit from tourism projects in and around its urban limits, he said.

Mr. Biltaji cited hotel and restaurant construction as well as the construction of the American University of the Jordan as boding future prosperity for Aqaba.

Last year, the tourism industry in Jordan contributed 11 per cent to the gross domestic product (GDP), the minister affirmed.

The tourism industry is the second highest earner of hard currency for Jordan, after that of mining, he concluded.

GAGP donated \$2.1 million to Jordan over past 4 years

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GAGP) in Jordan, mainly slated for social and charity organisations, has donated \$2.1 million to the Kingdom over the past four years, according to an Embassy of Japan report.

The two-page report delineated \$803,465 as invested in 12 projects in the Kingdom in 1996, nine projects at the cost of \$652,898 in 1995, seven projects totalling \$450,804 in 1994, and \$204,921 for four projects in 1993.

The grants were allocated to finance the establishment of social development centres, provision of medical equipment, support of thyme cultivation for Palestinian refugees, construction of a cheese factory for bedouins, and donations of furniture and books for public school libraries.

This aid also covered the provision of equipment to the Maan Centre for the Disabled, environmental treatment equipment for the Gulf of Aqaba, a leather factory to support Palestinian refugees, the construction of the Salt Training and Resource Institute for the Disabled as well as

other assorted projects.

According to the report, grants were also donated for educational institutions, such as the Young Women's Christian Association, the Saqar Quraysh Society, the Queen Alia Fund for Social Initiatives (QAF), the Bani Hamida Agricultural Cooperative Society and other institutions.

The GAGP has been extended mainly to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), research institutes, hospitals and local government, with emphasis in such areas as primary health care, poverty alleviation, training, women in development projects, the environment, education and assistance for the disabled.

Japan is one of the major foreign loan donors to the Kingdom. Statistics have indicated that between 1990 and 1994, assistance to Jordan was worth \$855 million, or nearly 40 per cent of external aid to the Kingdom, while combined aid from the European Union (EU) countries, as well as the EU as a body itself, was \$1.1 billion, or 44 per cent.

U.S. assistance to Jordan over the same time period was \$236 million, or 28 per cent.

2nd phase of Amman-Zarqa vehicle tunnel initiated

ZARQA (J.T.) — Work has begun on the second phase of a vehicle tunnel linking the Amman-Zarqa Highway with Army Street, Zarqa Mayor Mustafa Fayyad announced Monday.

The second phase of the project, estimated to cost JD 607,000, entails digging a 182-metre long two-lane tunnel, according to Dr. Fayyad.

Each lane will be seven metres wide and the two sides will be separated by an island, he added.

The mayor inspected the work's progress on the second phase and affirmed that the first phase of the project was completed at the overall cost of JD 59,300.

The project is a vital one to ease traffic congestion along the main highways of Zarqa and reduce road accidents, Dr. Fayyad maintained.

Thirty-seven metres of the tunnel will be covered, he added, and the road therein will be illuminated with lights fixed on top of a 20-metre tower.

Once the tunnel has been completed traffic lights at the site will be removed, according to the mayor.

He stated that work on the project should be completed in 100 days as stipulated in an agreement pertaining thereto with a local contractor.

Zarqa Municipality Engineer Samih Masaad affirmed that the construction team, responsible for the tunnel's construction, is building retaining walls, canals to drain rain water, and other relevant civil works.

Ministry of Social Development investigating new social centres

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Social Development Mohammad Kheir Mamsar announced that his department is looking for new social centres to replace old ones which, he said, are incapable of providing proper services.

"Approximately 70 per cent of the rehabilitation and other social centres are rented, either located in a geographic area not conducive to its purposes, or incapable of providing proper facilities and services for its inhabitants," Dr. Mamsar said.

For this purpose, the minister explained, the Ministry of Social Development recently initiated a programme of re-evaluation of rented social centres which house the disabled, children and adolescents, mainly in Zarqa, Irbid and Ma'an.

"We have asked the directors of such centres

to begin searching for new buildings with specifications which meet the generally approved standards for facilities and services," he said.

Dr. Mamsar told the Jordan Times that this step aims at increasing personal, social, health and educational programmes for those in need, "in addition to establishing programmes and activities (for the good of) the beneficiaries of these institutes."

He described the direct beneficiaries of such programmes as children, adolescents and the disabled.

The ministry also announced that it has initiated a project to aid street children, according to Social Defence Director at the Ministry of Social Development Musa Safi.

"We have rented two buildings in the Kingdom to receive and care for street children," Mr. Safi said.

"These centres will provide special pro-

grammes and to discontinue from these streets," he said.

Mr. Safi explained that the ministry will separate social centres from the family, "in addition to establishing programmes and activities (for the good of) the beneficiaries of these institutes."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Abbadi opens exhibition

AMMAN (Petra) — On the occasion of the 45th anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's accession to the Throne, Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi Monday opened an exhibition at the Greater Amman Municipality's main hall in Ras Al 'Ain. The exhibition includes photographs depicting the Kingdom's great achievements as well as the development of the Jordanian Armed Forces.

Bridge open to PNA areas

AMMAN (Petra) — The Public Security Department (PSD) announced Monday that the King Hussein Bridge is now open to travellers to and from the Palestinian National Authority (PNA)-ruled areas. The bridge is open from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. except Fridays and Saturdays at which time it is open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., according to the PSD.

Palestinians demonstrate in Ramallah, Gaza

(Continued from page 1)

Spokesman James Rubin said Monday that Mr. Ross will return from the Middle East to Washington in a day or two.

Observers believe that his soon departure reflects cautious optimism on the part of the U.S. administration and has increased hopes for U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to come to the region by the end of this month and possibly to initiate a three-way summit meeting with Mr. Arafat and Mr. Netanyahu.

Meanwhile, demonstrations broke out in Ramallah and Gaza by Palestinians calling on Israel to lift the closure and release the Palestinian security prisoners.

Israeli troops responded in Ramallah by firing rubber bullets, slightly wounding one man. It was the first violent confrontation between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers since Israel sealed off Palestinian areas and imposed a military blockade on the town and other self-rule enclaves on the West Bank.

The stone-throwers broke away from a demonstration of about 1,500 people inside Ramallah to rain stones on soldiers manning a roadblock set up at the town's southern entrance to enforce the blockade.

"What good is peace for, if our sons are still in prison and

if we are not allowed to move between Palestinian cities and villages," screamed one woman in Ramallah holding a photo of her jailed son. Palestinian troops kept an eye on the demonstrations but did not intervene.

"Things seem to be under control and we don't have to stop the march. These are our people and they are fully righteous in voicing their discontent at Israel's policy," said a Palestinian Major in the police force in Ramallah, who stood from a distance watching.

In Gaza City, about 3,000 demonstrators also protested the sanctions and Israel's failure to release Palestinian prisoners as called for under signed peace agreements. No violence was reported during the Gaza protest.

A number of youths participating in the march expressed full support for calls within the PNA that came out a few days ago urging the Palestinian leadership to pass a law of national service recruitment of youths in the Palestinian territories.

"Sure we are not going to serve in a uniformed army but still there are so many aspects of public service that we, as youths, can do to serve our people and our country," said Khalil, a 19 year old youth from Al Birah, next to Ramallah, who had just finished his

highschool. He argued that in every country on earth, people have the right and the opportunity to serve their country and "there is no reason why, we should differ from others."

Mr. Netanyahu told his cabinet on Monday that he had already asked Mr. Ross to clarify the issue on national service recruitment with Mr. Arafat. Mr. Netanyahu claimed the call was an open infringement to the Oslo interim Accords with the PNA.

Moreover, the Israeli Government Press Office prepared a 12-page document with 100 expressions of Palestinian figures over the last four years which, in their opinion, are incitements to violence and anti-Israeli propaganda and therefore violations of the Oslo accords, the Hebrew papers reported.

On top of those statements was a speech Mr. Arafat made to the Palestinian Legislative Council broadcast two days ago on Palestinian television. "They are conducting an open war against the Palestinian people. We need to resist them, to resist them, to resist them. We need to resist them in every sense of the word," the document quoted Mr. Arafat as saying.

Positive indicators of oil discovery

AMMAN (J.T.) — There are positive indicators of oil reserves in three regions of Jordan — the eastern desert, near the Dead Sea and at the region of Al Sarhan in the north, according to Natural Resources Authority (NRA) Director General Khaled Shiyab.

In a lecture at the Professional Associations Complex Sunday evening, Mr. Shiyab asserted that several firms, which have signed contracts with Jordan over the past two years to explore for oil and gas, are intensifying their search.

Their total investment in the Kingdom has heretofore been calculated at \$100 million, he explained.

As the result of NRA plans, several global oil firms, including the American firms Anadarko, Transglobal and AMOCO, have finalised contracts with the Kingdom to initiate oil and gas exploration in conjunction with the authority, according to Mr. Shiyab.

The NRA has provided data regarding potential areas of oil exploration collected from seismological surveys, he added.

Over the past two years, the NRA has signed con-

tracts with the three American oil firms as well as an Algerian oil firm, Mr. Shiyab affirmed.

The NRA will soon conclude a profit-sharing agreement with a Canadian firm on oil exploration, he added.

Some of these firms have already embarked on oil exploration and others are conducting seismological surveys, which Mr. Shiyab described as encouraging results.

While some oil firms have marked those areas in which they are to begin drilling exploratory wells, others are still in the process of conducting

geological and geophysical studies in areas under their jurisdiction, he stated.

Anadarko signed contracts to prospect for oil last year and in June concluded an agreement with the National Oil Company to borrow rigs and staff in order to commence drilling operations in the northeast, Mr. Shiyab explained.

The oil firm is commencing exploration in the region of Safawi and is slated to spend \$5 million in the first 3.5 years of its operations and a total of \$20 million over an eight-year period, he stated.

Minister of Mineral Resources Hammud al-Jarrah told Jordanians in June that Anadarko will drill "wildcat" wells, this association of oil and gas firms.

Referring to future contacts with the firm, Mr. Shiyab said, "The NRA is facilitating for the oil companies investment in the Kingdom on oil and gas."

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Amnesty blasts Israel for banning access to jail in S. Lebanon

(Continued from page 1)

the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) headquarters with another 150 people.

About 150 Lebanese are held in Khiam prison, many detained for more than 10 years without trial or charge. The jail opened in 1984 in the occupied zone and is manned by the Israeli

backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia. Another 52 Lebanese are in jails inside Israel.

Mr. Thibodeau denounced cases of torture and ill treatment at the jails, saying that "a large number of the Lebanese detainees need treatment and they are now agonising in their cells."

Mohammad Safa, presi-

dent of the Lebanese "follow-up" committee for the detainees, said Israel's continued ban against AI was "another violation of international law and human rights."

"These measures are meant to hide whatever is occurring in Khiam. We have information that prove that the condition of the detainees is dangerous and horrific," Mr.

Safa told AFP.

Mr. Safa said Israel "does not want the world to know what is happening in Khiam. It only started granting access into the jail to the ICRC in 1995 because their reports, unlike those of Amnesty, are not published."

Hariri, Arafat engage in war of words

(Continued from page 1)

in Lebanon on Saturday, killing five people, Lebanese police said.

"Mr. Arafat knows very well that Lebanon has suffered much and still suffers to defend the Palestinian cause. The Israelis hold him [Arafat] responsible for their security. He

responds that they [the bombers] came from another country," Mr. Hariri said.

Mr. Hariri also told Le Monde that it appeared it was "Arafat's people" who launched Katyusha rockets from Lebanon which hit northern Israel on Friday, slightly injuring one woman.

Mr. Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani denied the allegations. "This accusation is not true because the Palestinian activity in Lebanon has been limited on orders of the Palestinian leadership and could not run against the political policy of the Lebanese government," he told Agence France

Presse in Ramallah.

"Arafat feels saddened by the campaign against him in Lebanon, especially at a time when we need a unified Arab and Islamic position against the war waged by Israel on the Palestinian nation," he added.

Jordan stands as example bringing opposition into system

AMMAN (AP) — With a mix of finesse and compromise, Jordan has integrated its Islamist opposition into the system, sparing the Kingdom the strife that has visited Egypt and Algeria.

The relationship between the government and Islamist activists, who are mainly grouped within the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), has been symbiotic.

By and large, the MB has remained loyal to His Majesty King Hussein, despite his pro-Western stance and 1994 peace treaty with Israel. The King, meanwhile, allows the MB to protest his policies, particularly the growing ties with Israel.

Such opposition serves as a valve to release frustration within the Kingdom without having it erupt into a serious threat for the government.

Cooperation between the two has a long history. Early in his reign, King Hussein allied himself with the MB when Arab Nationalists inspired by Syria and Egypt launched several unsuccessful coup attempts in the 1950s.

To reward it for its allegiance, King Hussein allowed the group to operate as a charitable organisation, even after banning all other political parties in 1956.

Following a political liberalisation in the late 1980s, the MB exploited its strength in the mosques and among charity recipients to win 22 of Parliament's 80 seats in elections, making it the largest

bloc.

In 1991, six MB members even joined the cabinet for six months, giving it prominence unmatched by similar groups in most Arab countries.

But the MB soon learned that when it serves in the government, voters will expect promises to be fulfilled.

Rather than carrying out pledges to improve living conditions in a country where poverty and unemployment are rampant, the group focused on segregating the sexes in schools, banning alcohol, censoring risqué television programmes and veiling women.

Such goals angered the secular majority in Jordan, and the MB won five fewer seats in the 1993

election.

The MB then called for a general election in November, but the government refused to allow it. The MB then threatened to launch a campaign of civil disobedience on the changes in law. The Islamic Front (IAF), led by the MB, began a campaign of civil disobedience, but it was quickly suppressed.

But the government began to change its stance, hoping to win the support of the MB and IAF in a campaign to win the 1993 election.

"Our objective from the political arena is to vacuum the vacuum of power," said Hamzeh Manasseh, a

King Sihanouk dangles abdication threat ahead of crunch meeting

BEIJING (AFP) — King Norodom Sihanouk warned Monday he was ready to abdicate, as he prepared to meet Cambodian strongman Hun Sen, who is in Beijing seeking a royal "blessing" for his new administration.

The monarch further tangled the Cambodian crisis in a letter released on the eve of the crunch meeting with Second Prime Minister Hun Sen and new First Prime Minister Ung Huot, who has been named to replace the king's son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Analysts said the 74-year-old king's statement, following frequent offers to abdicate in the past, could be a ploy to gain influence in the battle for control of the country. King Sihanouk, who is revered in Cambodia, further muddled the waters by issuing a separate statement saying he planned to return to his country "soon."

Hun Sen's troops, meanwhile, kept up pressure on the final royalist bastion in the north of Cambodia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) failed to decide whether to recognise the new Phnom Penh leadership.

A meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers in Singapore

ended without any decision on Cambodia's entry into the group or recognition of Phnom Penh's new leadership.

Philippine Foreign Minister Domingo Siazon told a news conference ASEAN would pursue efforts to restore political stability in Cambodia, adding an informal meeting could be held between all parties.

That possibility was immediately grasped by Prince Ranariddh in Bangkok, who said: "I am ready to participate in an informal meeting with all the parties concerned, and if Mr. Hun Sen wants to take Mr. Ung Huot along, I will not say no."

The king said he was "ready to abdicate" if asked by Hun Sen during Tuesday's audience.

"My letter of abdication... has already been written," he wrote in an open letter faxed to AFP in Beijing.

"But I am waiting for Hun Sen, our 'strongman', to let me know... that I can abdicate without risking being criticised by him or being accused of creating additional difficulties for the country and the people."

If King Sihanouk were to step down, his successor would be chosen by a crown

council. Although Prince Ranariddh is his eldest son he would not necessarily take the throne.

King Sihanouk, who is in Beijing for medical treatment, will meet the two premiers and acting head of state, Chea Sim, at the head of a delegation seeking a symbolic blessing for the new political order in Phnom Penh.

Mr. Hun Sen ousted the prince following bloody street battles in Phnom Penh in early July.

The king, the United States and the exiled opponents of Mr. Hun Sen have all slammed Prince Ranariddh's replacement as undemocratic. King Sihanouk Saturday denounced Mr. Ung Huot as a "puppet" of Mr. Hun Sen but said he was powerless to change the political situation.

In the open letter, King Sihanouk denied his decision to grant the audience conferred royal recognition of the prince's ouster.

"The tradition of Cambodian kings is to always say 'yes' to appeals for audiences" from their subjects, he said.

The King added he would refuse to address Ung Huot as first prime minister, saying: "I will call him only

'excellency' or 'your excellency'."

Mr. Hun Sen and Mr. Ung Huot appeared oblivious of the king's action, but the forces of the second prime minister were gaining the upper hand in their battle for control of the country.

Troops loyal to Mr. Hun Sen and the prince clashed for the third day near the Thai border and the second premier's military chief said his forces would overrun flagging royalist troops this week.

Ke Kim Yan said the last royalist bastion at O Smach, in northwestern Cambodia, would be captured within a week as Prince Ranariddh's troops were low on morale and ammunition. The two sides are battling it out about 15 kilometres south of O Smach which straddles Cambodia's northern border with Thailand.

"There is fairly intense fighting going on between both sides," a source from the area said.

"It's not clear whether there has been any movement, but the exchanges are certainly strong."

Other sources said some 30,000 Cambodians had massed at the Thai border as the clashes intensified.



Cambodia's Second Prime Minister Hun Sen (right) and newly appointed First Prime Minister Ung Huot (left) walk together at Phnom Penh's Pochentong Airport Monday before their departure for Beijing to meet with King Norodom Sihanouk (Reuters photo)

Indian extremist group stages two bomb attacks protesting atomic plant

MADRAS (AFP) — An extremist group Monday exploded two bombs in this southern Indian city to protest against an atomic plant being built with Russian collaboration, police said.

Police said one person was injured in the pre-dawn blast at a cultural centre run by the Russian consulate while a second bomb went off at a local election office.

A little-known extremist group, the Tamil People's Liberation Front, claimed responsibility in some pamphlets saying the blasts were in protest against an atomic energy plant being built near the town of Tutunelveli.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Muthuvel

Karunanidhi said security services had been put on high alert across the sprawling coastal state of 55 million people.

He said some Tamil extremist groups were trying to disrupt celebrations marking India's 50th anniversary of independence Friday, Aug. 15.

Police said there were two other bomb explosions overnight Sunday in which at least 10 people were injured. It was not immediately clear if the earlier blasts were linked to the Tamil People's Liberation Front.

The front did not specify why it was opposed to the Russian plant. But environmentalists have attacked it as being environmentally

unsafe.

A guard at the Russian consulate here was injured in the blast, police said, adding a portion of the building had been damaged.

A Russian diplomat in New Delhi denied the bombing was over the plant. "I have heard the group wanted to protest on the 50th year of Indian independence," Information Counsellor Valeri Vladimirov said. "Nothing was mentioned about the plant."

K. K. Rajasekharan, police chief of the state of Tamil Nadu, of which Madras is capital, told AFP the explosives were "crude contraptions of gelatine sticks." The group claimed responsibility for a bus bomb attack last year.

Indian army chief says Bangladesh could buy Indian military hardware

DHAKA (AFP) — Indian Army Chief General Shankar Roy Chowdhury has said Dhaka-New Delhi military ties could be strengthened further and Bangladesh could buy military hardware from its larger neighbour, it was reported here Monday.

"Military cooperation to a certain extent is already there... But we would like to develop this certainly," he was quoted as saying by the Daily Star newspaper.

Gen. Chowdhury, who is scheduled to leave for home Tuesday at the end of a one week goodwill visit, said existing cooperation only covered training of officers in each other's military academies.

"Bangladesh's buying military hardware from India was also a possibility... there are opportunities be-

cause India has got a very large (weapons) industry," Gen. Chowdhury said.

"So depending on a case to case... it can certainly be considered on a government to government basis at the highest level."

But he added the issue had not been discussed between the two neighbouring countries. Bangladesh currently gets most of its military hardware from China.

On cross-border insurgency faced by both Bangladesh and India, the army chief said the two countries were united as "restoring peace has been high on our agenda... changed government policies have been extremely helpful of late."

But he hinted problems still existed. "Peace is also the need of the hour as business and economy take precedence over politics these days... If we don't have peace in our region, we won't be able to benefit from the opportunities of regional cooperation," Gen. Chowdhury said.

Gen. Chowdhury held talks with Bangladesh President Shababuddin Ahmed, government leaders, Bangladesh Army Chief Lieutenant General Mahabub Rahman and other senior defence officials.

The official BSS news agency said the Bengali-speaking Indian army chief toured military establishments and his ancestral home in southwestern Sakhira district from where his family migrated to India after the 1947 partition of the subcontinent.

Rebels vow no attack on Thai-Burma bridge

BANGKOK (AFP) — The Karen National Union (KNU) dismissed on Monday fears that it could target for terrorist attack the opening ceremony later this week of the Thai-Burma Friendship Bridge.

The KNU, the only major insurgency in Burma yet to reach a ceasefire with Rangoon, also rejected claims that the threat of attack gave the ruling junta grounds to prevent Thais travelling inland into Burma after the opening.

"The KNU has no reason whatsoever to attack innocent people, foreigners or the opening ceremony of the bridge," the KNU said in a faxed statement received here.

The bridge, which will link Mae Sot in northern Thailand and Myawaddy in

eastern Burma across the Moei River is one of three international checkpoints to be inaugurated Friday along the Thai-Burma border.

The KNU accused the ruling junta of portraying them as terrorists to lower the political prestige of the KNU, which has been battling central Burmese governments for almost 50 years.

"Taking advantage of the occasion for the opening of the Mae Sot-Myawaddy Bridge, the SLORC is presently trying to tarnish the image of the KNU by slanderous propaganda," the statement said.

The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) is the official name for the Burmese junta. A Thai Foreign Ministry official said Burma had

requested that Thais with temporary border passes and foreigners travelling on international passports not be allowed to travel beyond Myawaddy after the opening.

This was due to poor infrastructure inland and Burmese government concerns about the security risk posed by ethnic minority groups, including the KNU, as well as Shan and Wa minorities.

At the other new checkpoints — at Ranong in southern Thailand to Kawthaung, and from Mae Sai at the northern tip of Thailand to Tachilek — there would not be restrictions on access for foreigners or Thais, the official said. Burma had expressed the intention to lift the restrictions at Myawaddy as soon as possible,

the official added.

The Friendship Bridge opening will be presided over by Thai Deputy Premier and Commerce Minister Korn Dabbarangsi and the Burmese and Thai deputy foreign ministers, the Thai Foreign Ministry said.

The bridge, which is hoped to prove a boost for bilateral trade, was almost fully constructed by 1995, but was only completed this year because of border disputes.

The opening of the international checkpoints, less than a month after Burma's admittance into the Association of South East Asian Nations, is important in establishing a through route from Southeast Asia to the Indian subcontinent.

Indonesia's Megawati rejects reconciliation with rivals

JAKARTA (AFP) — Ousted Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI) leader Megawati Sukarnoputri has rejected overtures by political rivals for talks on a possible reconciliation later in the year, reports said here Monday.

Ms. Megawati's implicit rejection of the overtures came when she refused to accept moves to organise a party congress on behalf of the PDI, by anyone other than herself or her ousted supporters.

Only her faction has the right to hold a party meeting, she said, according to the Merdeka daily, adding it

was "impossible according to our party's constitution for anybody else to hold a (PDI) congress."

And she insisted that under the PDI's constitution "a party congress will be held in December 1998."

December 1998 is the scheduled date for PDI's next five-yearly general meeting. It will also officially mark the end of Ms. Megawati's five-year term of office as PDI chairwoman according to the 1993 party congress when she was elected.

The minority PDI party was split after the popular

Ms. Megawati was ousted as leader in June 1996, two years before the end of her term, by a Jakarta-backed faction which installed Mr. Suryadi as the new leader.

On Friday her rivals from the Jakarta-backed PDI faction called for a "national dialogue" with her faction "as early as August" to reconcile the party's rift.

The party under Mr. Suryadi was virtually wiped off the political map in may general elections, drawing barely three per cent of the vote, compared to 15 per cent in 1992 polls. Many observers believe the gov-

ernment had Ms. Megawati removed because it was wary of her increasing popularity.

The daughter of founding Indonesian President Sukarno, she has remained defiant and maintains she is PDI's legitimate leader. She is immensely popular with the public, while Mr. Suryadi has faced numerous demonstrations opposing his leadership.

On Saturday PDI official and Ms. Megawati loyalist Subagyo Anam said a reconciliation could only happen if all factions recognised Ms. Megawati as the PDI's leader.

Diana, new friend thrill British press

LONDON (AFP) — Princess Diana was to return home Sunday from a three-day trip to Bosnia campaigning against landmines to find her private life splashed over the front pages of the British press.

Readers snapped up the Sunday Mirror, which carried exclusive pictures of the Princess of Wales in the arms of Dodi Al Fayed, the son and heir of millionaire Egyptian businessman Mohammed Al Fayed.

But the grainy pictures, snapped with a telephoto lens on Mr. Al Fayed's yacht off the coast of Sardinia, contain nothing scandalous like the infamous "toe-sucking" session Princess Diana's then sister-in-law Sarah Ferguson had with her financial adviser.

The 36-year-old princess is seen in a geranium-patterned swimsuit with her arms round her companion in a pair of sunglasses.

In other words, a small

gesture of intimacy. But no more was required for the sensationalist press to marvel at her "explosion of sensuality," while the heavyweight press compared the fledgling relationship to "a Jackie O. scenario."

The Sunday Mirror said: "You only have to look at the sensual body language of Diana and Dodi Fayed to know that they have found physical and spiritual fulfilment in each other."

"Dodi Fayed has unleashed a passion, a self-confidence, a sexuality that not even Diana knew she possessed."

The paper said that five days alone with Mr. Dodi had done more for Princess Diana than five years with her "cold-hearted husband (who) prefers shooting helpless animals on a wide-eyed moor at Balmoral than frolicking in the sun."

The News of the World

supplied Mr. Al Fayed's ex-wife — whom he married 11 years ago — with

his telephone number so that she might receive his confidences on the relationship.

"It's not a fling, it's serious," was the verdict.

The paper, which was out-bid by the Sunday Mirror's 250,000-pound (\$400,000) offer for the pictures, made do with a Di-Dodi photo-montage and a front-page picture of him stretched out with the head of a short-haired blonde on his belly — his ex-wife.

Other papers saw the affair with a less indulgent eye.

Prince Charles meanwhile was said by friends to find his ex-wife's behaviour "laughable but also appalling," the Sunday Times reported.

"Will Diana marry Dodi? Will Dodi's dad, supplier of groceries to the queen and of bribes to the House of Commons, get a seat at the royal table?" the paper queried.

Mr. Dodi was reported to have flown to Los Angeles to buy an engage-

ment ring and Princess Diana to have cancelled all her appointments from November.

The conservative Sunday Telegraph said Princess Diana "might sail into danger on the boat of a man of dubious reputation."

"His father is involved in the cash-for-questions scandal, his uncle, Adnan Khashoggi, is an arms dealer."

The paper noted that in the short time she has been involved with Mr. Dodi Fayed, Princess Diana has quickly taken to the world of fast living.

"Is the mother of the future king in danger of becoming a fast woman?" The paper observed that Princess Diana "always ends up with second-class riff-raff."

"Dodi isn't even very good Eurotrash; he's not a Flick or a Thyssen or a Bourbon. Besides Dodi Al Fayed, Aristotle Onassis looks like a prince."

Over 100 Chinese war victims protest in Japan

TOKYO (R) — Over 100 Chinese war victims and their families filed a lawsuit Monday demanding that the Japanese government apologise and offer compensation for germ warfare the Japanese Army conducted during World War II.

The 108 plaintiffs filed suit at the Tokyo District Court demanding that the Japanese government pay a total of 1.08 billion Yen (\$9.3 million) in damages from plagues allegedly set off by the Japanese Army during World War II.

"Over 390 died from the plague in my village and more than 400 houses were burnt down. The Japanese government must acknowledge its war crime and apologise," Wang Jingdi, one of the plaintiffs, told a news conference.

It was the first lawsuit filed against the Japanese government in relation to germ warfare allegedly conducted by the Japanese Imperial Army during the Sino-Japanese War.

Acting on secret orders from Emperor Hirohito, the army set up germ warfare units code-named 731 and 100 that conducted experimental surgery on live prisoners of war and tested biological agents on them.

Research by Japanese and Chinese academics showed that Unit 731, headed by General Shiro Ishii, also used airplanes to spread fleas carrying bubonic plague and cholera, killing thousands of Chinese.

Just before Japan's surrender, the unit set free thousands of infected rats that caused widespread plague in 22 counties of Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces, claiming more than 20,000 Chinese lives, researchers said.

"My brother died, my uncles and aunts died, even our dog died... But the Japanese government still does not acknowledge this historical fact. That is impermissible," said 63-year-old He Yingzhen from Changde in Hunan province.

The Japanese government has not publicly acknowledged that it conducted germ warfare during World War II, which was prohibited under international law at the time.

The heinous crime has not been brought before a court of justice in the last 50 years. The government, knowing it was a crime, concealed the facts all these years. That in itself is another national crime," said lawyer Keiichiro Ichinose, one of the six lawyers representing the plaintiffs.

The occupation authorities granted Gen. Ishii and other top officers and researchers of Unit 731 immunity from prosecution at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal in exchange for the results of their years of research into biological and chemical warfare, according to research by U.S. journalist John W. Powell.

This immunity meant Gen. Ishii and his colleagues never appeared in court anywhere, and most Japanese citizens were unaware of the unit's activities until 1981, when author Seiichi Morimura exposed the unit's dark history in his book, "The Devil's Gluttony."

In 1992, Japan's public television network NHK obtained and showed copies of documents stored at the U.S. Army's Dugway proving ground in Utah which proved that the United States received the unit's reports after the war.

The lawyers said they had talked to a Japanese soldier who claims he actually spread germs over Chinese soil and said they may consider asking the man, whose name was withheld, to stand as a witness in court. "His testimony will be a crucial part of this trial," said Mr. Ichinose.



Soldiers loyal to President Boris Yeltsin signed a peace treaty, aimed at ending a

K. army sw

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Tajik soldiers loyal to President Imomali Rakhmonov take their position eight kilometres south of the capital Dushanbe. The fighting between presidential troops and a mutinous government commander comes only weeks after Mr. Rakhmonov signed a peace agreement with armed Islamic opposition guerrillas, who play no role in the current unrest, aimed at ending a four-year civil war in the country (Reuters photo)

U.K. army swap hats for helmets after IRA truce

BELFAST (R) — British army troops in Northern Ireland swapped battle helmets for soft regimental hats Monday in response to an easing of security since the Irish Republican Army (IRA) declared a ceasefire on July 20.

A spokesman for the 17,000 British troops in the province said the step was taken "in the light of the current assessment of the threat to the security forces following the declaration of the IRA ceasefire."

It was the latest sign of an easing of the tension which has held the province in its grip during 28 years of war by IRA guerrillas against British rule.

Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam said in weekend remarks that the first two weeks of the IRA ceasefire were the most incident-free for years, despite three murders, one of which police suspect was sectarian.

Similar so-called confidence-building measures

were taken after the IRA called its first ceasefire in August 1994 but were scrapped when the guerrillas reverted to violence with bomb attacks on the British mainland in February 1996. But since July 20 there have been no IRA bombs or attacks on British troops or the 12,000-strong Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) police they were sent to protect more than two decades ago.

Members of the Royal Highland Fusiliers wore their traditional "tam o'shanter" soft hats of khaki with a white plume when they went on patrol with police in the Roman Catholic, Irish Nationalist stronghold of West Belfast Monday.

The RUC has already shed customary flak jackets and automatic weapons for routine patrols, although both are in evidence for set-piece confrontations such as last weekend's marches by pro-British Protestant Loyalists and Catholic Nationalists.

Thousands of heavily-armed police deployed in Belfast and Londonderry at the weekend behind armour-plated jeeps to keep a lid on tension and police said that apart from minor incidents, the events passed off peacefully.

Loyalists clashed briefly with Catholics in Londonderry when 12,000 Protestant Apprentice Boy marchers paraded through Northern Ireland's second city.

The violence, and a hoax bomb alert on a bridge over which the parade passed, overshadowed what police said was a largely peaceful march by a key Protestant, pro-British organisation through a Catholic, Irish Nationalist stronghold.

Breakaway Loyalist and Republican groups remain active though and security forces have not dropped their guard against any attempts to wreck multi-party Northern Ireland peace talks which start on Sept. 15.

A 16-year-old Catholic boy was beaten to death and dumped in a field last month in what police fear may have been a sectarian attack. Several people have been charged.

The Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF), a rogue group which is not observing an October 1994 Loyalist ceasefire, said in a weekend statement that it would bomb Ireland to thwart what it called attempts to end Northern Ireland's British status.

Police believe the LVF was responsible for a string of bomb attacks against Sinn Féin, the IRA's political wing, and an attempt to bomb the border town of Dundalk in June.

Breakaway IRA splinter groups such as the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) and Continuity Army Council (CAC) say they will continue their guerrilla war and oppose any attempts to negotiate a settlement that falls short of the united Ireland both seek.

Tanzania, former Zaire to formalise refugee accord

KIGOMA (AFP) — Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) will soon seal an accord to allow thousands of refugees to return home to the former Zaire, the U.N. refugee agency said Monday.

"We want to obtain assurances from Kinshasa that the refugees will be safe," said Bushra Halepota, the director of the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kasuru, northwestern Tanzania.

She said an agreement reached in principle between Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa and DRC President Laurent Kabila, who met in Kinshasa on July 27, would be formalised by the end of the month.

Thousands of the some 75,000 refugees staying in

two remote camps in western Tanzania — 40,000 in Nyanugusu and 35,000 in Lugufu — are eager to return home.

The first candidates signed up for voluntary repatriation in May, but the UNHCR and Tanzanian authorities were not confident in the security conditions in DRC, where Mr. Kabila's forces have been accused of systematically killing Rwandan Hutu refugees in the east of the country.

Many Zaireans living in the eastern town of Uvira fled to Tanzania with the arrival of Mr. Kabila's rebels, who began their ultimately successful campaign to oust President Mobutu Sese Seko in the area.

Many of the refugees fled relatively affluent lives as

doctors, civil servants and merchants, and now find themselves living in a rocky wasteland, in small mud huts with plastic tarps overhead, and complaining of inadequate sanitary conditions.

At the UNHCR office in Lugufu, refugees were demanding an explanation for the delay.

"We are waiting for the repatriation. We know that Mr. Kabila and Kabila have met and that the meeting was positive. But nothing is happening. We are yearning to go home to rebuild our country," said a refugee who identified himself only as Wilson.

"We're far from everything here," said another refugee, Francis, a former hospital technician. "Most of my colleagues in the civil

service have already gone back. They couldn't stand being stuck here, isolated from everything."

An aid worker said: "No one wants anything to do with Lugufu. Even the local people won't go there. There's nothing you can do there." He added: "Imagine asking Zairean urbanites to live like peasants."

The UNHCR wants to oversee the repatriation closely. "We want to avoid that some people get lost or that some women be raped," Ms. Halepota said. "There is a lot of assistance to be provided here and on the other side" of the border.

Tanzania is host to another 230,000 refugees, from Burundi's ongoing civil war. They are also awaiting assurances of an improved security situation at home.

Tajikistan president's forces clash with mutinous warlord

LEUR, TAJIKISTAN (R) — Troops loyal to Tajik President Imomali Rakhmonov clashed with a mutinous government commander south of Dushanbe Monday, using artillery and Grad rockets.

Near the village of Leur, about 18 km south of the Tajik capital, puffs of smoke lifted off the crest of a parched mountainside as Mr. Rakhmonov's Presidential Guard fired shells and rockets every few minutes at forces under maverick Colonel Makhrud Khudoyberdiyev.

"It was quiet overnight but we started fighting at about 8.30 am" said a tired, unshaven commander in charge of a ragged collection of soldiers on the republic's main southern road.

His men, wearing a confusing collection of uniforms, lounged under trees

and toyed with their rifles. A couple of kilometres from their position, hidden behind trees near a river, a sickening roar announced the departure of a Grad rocket.

An elderly Tajik in a faded indigo skull-cap, sitting by the side of the road, did not wince as a single shell returned by Col. Khudoyberdiyev's troops exploded in the fields behind him.

"We're bringing in the harvest as normal," he said. The road was closed to civilian traffic but peasants gathered in hay and red, yellow and green peppers.

Fighting broke out in Dushanbe Saturday but died down Sunday after forces under Tajik Interior Minister Sukhrob Kasimov seized a northern district from a rival warlord, Yakub Salimov.

Civilians and private

transport were back on the city's streets Monday and shops were open.

Col. Khudoyberdiyev moved his forces towards Dushanbe Saturday from his base in Kurgan Tyube, in the south of the former Soviet republic, to aid Mr. Salimov.

The commander of an elite government armoured brigade, Col. Khudoyberdiyev has seized upon unrest in Dushanbe to advance his own, as yet unclear, political ambitions.

Russian military sources said armed "volunteers," whom they see as supporting Col. Khudoyberdiyev, also clashed with the Presidential Guard around Shakhinav, 22 km west of Dushanbe.

The fighting comes just weeks after Mr. Rakhmonov signed a peace agreement with armed Islamist opposition guerrillas — who play no role in the cur-

rent unrest — aimed at ending a four-year civil war in the country.

War in the mountainous Central Asian state of 5.7 million has seen it carved up into independent fiefdoms under the control of a bewildering array of armed groups, much like those in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Western observers see the 20,000 Russian troops in the republic, who carry out peacekeeping duties and guard the frontiers, as the main guarantee of the embattled president's survival.

The Russian troops have so far only established extra armed posts of peacekeepers around Dushanbe, and Mr. Rakhmonov's spokesman told Reuters they had not been asked for assistance.

"The question of asking for Russian help is not being considered," Zafar Saidov said by telephone.

Floods in southern China kill 300

BEIJING (AFP) — Flooding last month in the southern Chinese province of Yunnan killed more than 300 people and left more than 18,000 injured, according to a report seen here Monday.

The figure, published in the Yunnan Daily on Aug. 7, effectively doubles the reported death toll in summer flooding across southern and southeastern China.

The newspaper said almost 25 million people across 17 prefectures had been affected by the floods that lasted from June 20 to July 23. The precise number of dead was put at 301 with 18,300 injured.

Nearly 120,000 houses collapsed and 780,000 hectares of farmland were inundated as rivers and reservoirs in the province broke their banks. Previous reports had put the number of summer flood deaths in Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, Jiangxi and Zhejiang provinces at just over 300. None of the reports had mentioned fatalities in Yunnan. Warning that the devastation would seriously deplete the autumn grain harvest, Yun-nan Daily said the direct economic losses had been estimated at 8.2 billion yuan (\$1 billion).

Irrigation systems have also been completely destroyed by the rising waters. The new figures, which were released by the provincial government during a top-level meeting on Aug. 6, make Yunnan far and away the worst-hit province of all those reporting flood damage.

Troops have been mobilised to help local residents with mopping-up and relief efforts and the provincial leaders pledged that anti-flood work would be given top priority.

However, relief work has been hampered by the fact that flooding has seriously disrupted transport systems in the province.

Officials from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, who recently visited other badly-hit provinces, described scenes of total devastation in isolated areas where whole villages had been virtually washed away by flash floods.

The damage across the southern region has left local officials struggling to cope with the logistical nightmare of sheltering tens of thousands of families whose homes were destroyed.

So far, however, the Chinese authorities have reported no outbreaks of water-borne epidemics as a result of the flooding.

South Africa's truth commission studies new evidence in Hani probe

PRETORIA (AFP) — A truth commission hearing to consider amnesty for the right-wing killers of South African Communist leader Chris Hani was delayed a few hours Monday to allow the examination of newly submitted documents.

Early Monday, the Hani family lawyer, George Bizos, submitted new documents to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to the lawyers representing Janusz Walus and Clive Derby Lewis at Pretoria's city hall, prompting the commission to delay the hearing to the afternoon.

The much-awaited hearing had already been postponed once, on June 23, at the request of Mr. Bizos, who sought more time to prepare a case against the amnesty bid.

Mr. Bizos would not say whether the documents contained new elements implicating apartheid-era leaders in the killing. "That may be. You will just have to wait and see," Mr. Bizos said.

Mr. Walus and Mr. Derby Lewis, who were both given life sentences for the Hani murder, put in a bid for amnesty soon after the truth panel began

work in April 1996.

They were initially sentenced to death in 1994, but their sentences were commuted after capital punishment was suspended.

The truth body, headed by Nobel Peace Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, can grant pardons to perpetrators of politically motivated acts.

Unproven theories have circulated since the April 1993 killing that it was masterminded by the apartheid government still in power, or that some of Hani's own allies in the now-ruling African National Congress (ANC) were involved.

The murder of Hani, one of South Africa's most popular crusaders against apartheid, nearly sparked a race war in the turbulent period before the historic April 1994 all-race elections.

Witnesses saw Mr. Walus, a Polish immigrant, shooting Hani at pointblank range outside his home in a Johannesburg suburb. Mr. Derby Lewis, a Conservative Party MP, had provided the murder weapon.

Mr. Derby Lewis's brother Gerald said: "If Clive was a leading mem-

ber of the Conservative Party and he was an MP and a member of the party's Presidential Council, if he says the party ordered the killing then that is what happened."

The party itself, which now has a few hundred adherents opposed to South Africa's multi-racial government, has distanced itself from Mr. Derby Lewis.

Hani's family, the Communist Party and the ruling African National Congress, represented jointly before the truth commission, are staunchly opposed to amnesty for the killers, regardless of whether they were commissioned.

Some analysts have speculated that some Conservative political elements wished Hani dead for opposing concessions to the then white minority government during pre-election constitutional negotiations.

The Communist leader was involved in the negotiations for a peaceful transition to power and had renounced violence, Mr. Bizos noted.

Last Italian peacekeeping troops leave Albania

ROME (AFP) — The last Italian peacekeeping troops left Albania on Monday, Italian military sources said. General Luciano Forlani, commander of the multinational protection force which has been in the country since April 15, flew to Milan with 23 soldiers.

At its peak the force numbered 7,500 soldiers, of whom 3,700 were Italian.

It successfully ensured the delivery of foreign aid and

kept main roads in the strife-hit country open.

Troops also protected foreign observers to the parliamentary elections held June 29, which saw a left-wing government and president returned to power.

The international community sent the peace keepers in after months of civil disorder on condition that the Albanian authorities continued to uphold democracy and human rights.

Nine Italian officers, under the command of General Luigi Cantone, remain in Albania to give technical assistance to the Albanian military.

Albania has been wracked by lawlessness and gang warfare since an armed uprising in March sparked by violent anti-government protests over the collapse of Bogus get-rich-quick investment schemes.

During the violence Al-

bania's police force was totally overwhelmed by the unrest as thousands of people broke into military barracks and stole an estimated one million weapons and tonnes of ammunition.

An estimated one million weapons remain in the hands of the population.

Up to 1,800 people have died in the last five months in clashes between rival groups.

Six freeze to death in Peru snowstorm

PERU (AFP) — Six people froze to death Sunday inside vehicles trapped on roads covered in as much as two metres of snow, civil defence officials told AFP.

At least 800 people in some 50 vehicles were still trapped on roads that have been battered by a violent snowstorm for four days, and were asking officials to send helicopters to rescue them.

Officials said that buses, cars and trucks have been trapped since dawn Thursday by heavy snows on a stretch of the Pucquio-Abancay Highway, some 840 kilometres from Lima and some 3,800 metres above sea level.

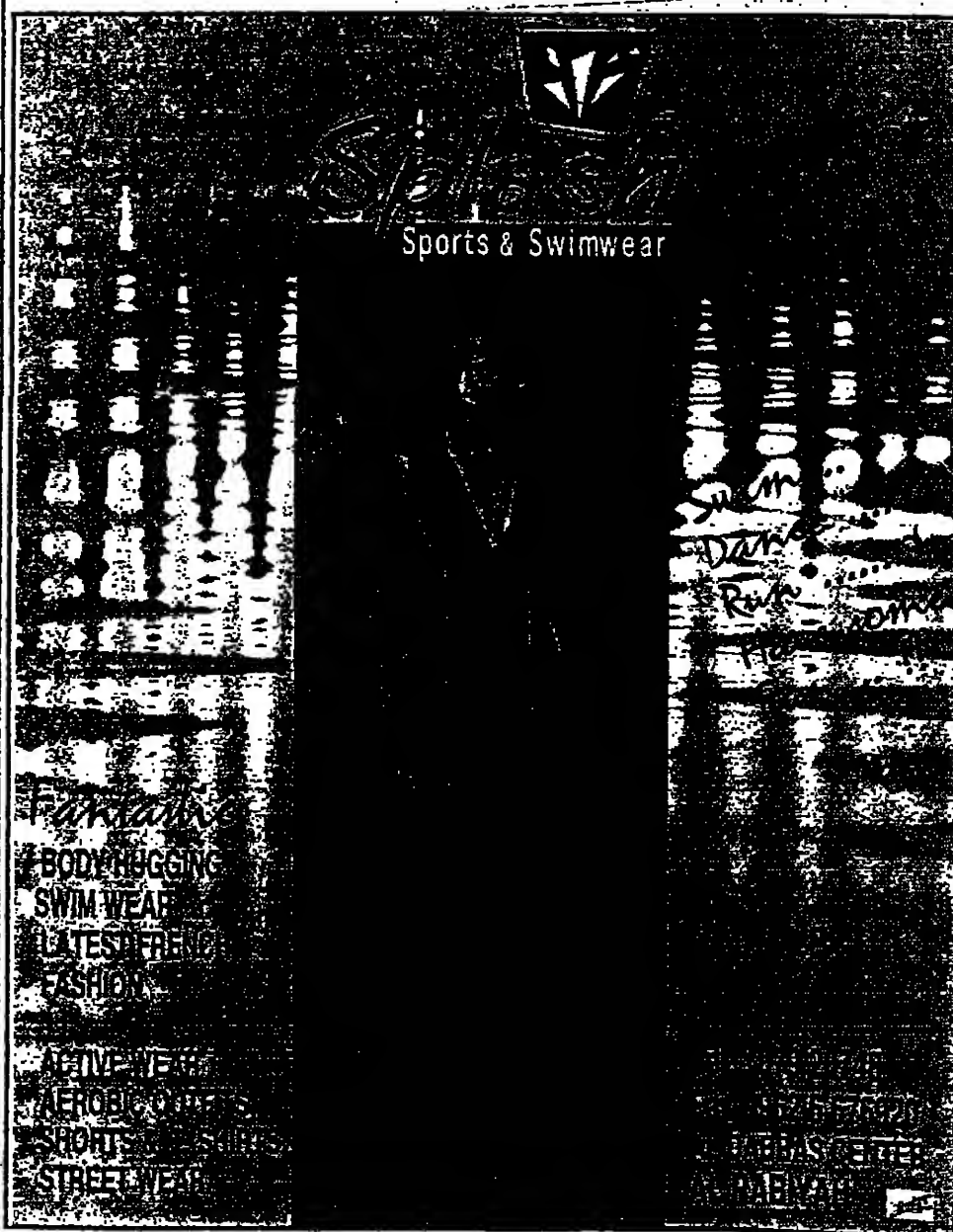
Civil Defence Sub-Commander Andres Salazar told AFP that four people died early Sunday and two more died later

in the day due to the extreme cold, which he estimated at minus 10 degrees Celsius.

Mr. Salazar asked the air force to immediately send aircraft to evacuate the children, women and elderly who were trapped in the area.

"In the meantime, for God's sake, we want the authorities to also send as soon as possible medicine, food and blankets," one of the victims said in a radio transmission.

From Lima authorities were preparing late Sunday to send out bulldozers and heavy earth moving equipment to the area to help clear the roads. They were also coordinating with mines in the area to borrow their heavy vehicles.



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Voter deciding to vote

THE GOVERNMENT of Abdul Salam Majali is trying hard to extend an olive branch to the opposition parties which are calling for a national boycott of the November 4 general elections. The prime minister emerged from Sunday's Cabinet meeting, convened to examine the preparatory work for the parliamentary elections, declaring that his government will continue to seek a dialogue with the opposition and will take every step to ensure fair and free elections. Dr. Majali went out of his way to assure the people that the government represents all Jordanians and does not favour one party, including the National Constitutional Party, over other parties.

The opposition, which includes an array of different political thought and ideology, ranges from the Islamic Action Front, Al Mustakbal and the Jordan Arab Constitutional Front to the National Action Front, the Jordan's People's Democratic Party (HASP) and Al Ansar. These have already decided against taking part in the elections. Other opposition parties which encompass no less than five other factions have apparently kept their options open for the time being pending the resolution of their demands. A side effect of this pre-election electioneering might well have been that voters and potential voters may have thought twice about showing up at the polls. Instead of concentrating on issues and candidates, the 1,737,000 eligible voters could have allowed themselves to be embroiled in the who's running-who's not running game.

But judging from government reports, voter registration is proceeding on a healthy scale. Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid Sunday confirmed that "the number of persons registering to vote has exceeded all expectations." Translated into real terms, it seems that Jordanians are casting their lot in greater numbers than anticipated in favour of affirmative action on D day. The minister also revealed that no less than 146,000 new voters have registered, and thus support positive participation in the next elections.

Even though we continue to believe that most if not all of the grievances of the opposition are genuine and worthy of consideration, we still support the call for a positive participation in the elections. If Jordanians opt to stay away from the voting stations until perfect conditions prevail, then there will never be an occasion or opportunity to remedy whatever shortcomings that may still exist. It is one thing to openly declare the substantive points of view that need redress and quite another to stay on the sidelines and wait for a miracle to happen. Any meaningful dialogue is by nature a process that cannot be expected to be completed in a one-shot attempt. That is why we still continue to believe that the best way to deal with all the real issues troubling voters of all views is to go to the ballot boxes on election day and vote for the candidate who is committed to the desired changes.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Rai hailed a recent call by Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan, president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), who has urged Arab countries to take a united stand and stop the repression against the Palestinians and end the sanctions on Iraq. Sultan Hattab said that while the Zionists are attacking the Palestinian people, the Iraqis continue to suffer at the hands of the United States and of nations imposing sanctions on Iraq. Sheikh Zayed has called on the Arabs to end their subjugation to the foreign domination and the oppressors who are causing suffering to the Arab people of Palestine and Iraq, and to put an end to the continued Israeli arrogance and the Israeli measures that tend to starve and annihilate the Palestinians, said the writer. It is time for the Arab leaders to follow the example of the UAE president, not only in condemning the continuation of the present repression exercised on the Iraqis and the Palestinians but also in taking steps to end the oppressed people's sufferings, urged the writer. He said that the time has come for the Arabs to rally to the help of their brothers and sisters in Palestine and Iraq and put an end to injustice, stressing that Sheikh Zayed's call should reach the conscience of all Arabs and trigger positive action in defence of national interests.

A WRITER for Al Dustour expressed concern that the Jordanian women are not doing enough to project women candidates for the 13th parliament. Khawla Abdul Hadi said that the elections are less than three months away but women unions, which have been attending seminars and meetings to pool their efforts in support of women candidates, have not yet embarked on meaningful steps to put their ideas into facts and help women candidates by deed rather than word to reach Parliament. The writer said that without women support for women candidates, they have a slim chance of winning seats. She said women unions can launch nationwide campaigns to explain to the public the ideas and the programmes of their candidates when they are elected to Parliament. She said that women candidates in general do not have as good a chance as men in the Arab society and they more often than not lack funds to finance their election campaigns and hence they require women unions' assistance in this regard.

A View from the Fourth Circle

Dennis Ross' continuing journey, from entertainment to balance

By Rami G. Khouri

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The idea that American mediation via Dennis Ross and Co. can or will make a significant breakthrough in the troubled Israeli-Palestinian peace-making process is rather illusory, a feeling that is quickly confirmed by a visit to the American capital. Several things quickly become obvious here vis-à-vis Arab-Israeli peace making.

The first is that the whole process has become almost peripheral to American (and Western) strategic interests. The Middle East, with its traditional modern focus on the Arab-Israeli conflict, is no longer as troubling or as important to the West as it was a decade or two ago. Bill Clinton's orchestration of the Sharm Al Sheikh anti-terror photo opportunity summit last year was the culmination of this trend — a sign that from now on the Middle East gets symbolic, rather than substantive, attention from the world's powers. Today, we get only Dennis Ross, downgraded from frequent to occasional traveller to the Middle East.

There is a clear, direct and unavoidable relationship among the three routinely recurring events in the last 13 months, since the Netanyahu government took office in Israel: a) heightened headline rhetoric and actions by the Israeli government on key issues like Jewish settlements and Jerusalem, b) acts of violence against Israelis by Palestinians and other Arabs, and, c) diplomatic shuffles by Dennis Ross.

We would do well to better understand the meaning of this troubling triad, rather than merely perpetuating it without addressing its central, causal forces.

The second obvious point is that the inherent pro-Israeli imbalance in the Oslo process is perfectly acceptable to the United States. The harsh tone and provocative policies of the Netanyahu government in Israel are new realities that must be accommodated in the diplomatic equation and, therefore, in the future of the region; this is the logical conclusion that one derives here from an analysis of the actions and policies of the U.S. government. It seems that the status quo in the Middle East, with its bombs and tensions, is more annoying than threatening from the American perspective. It demands a more sustained but not much deeper or more meaningful version of last year's Sharm Al Sheikh entertainment spectacle. So, we get Dennis Ross, with the promise of a possible personal appearance by the one and only Madeleine Albright if

things go well this week and next. This is not a sign of American seriousness about the gravity of the Arab-Israeli situation; it is a sign of American nonchalance, which in turn accurately reflects the low diplomatic and strategic priority that the Arab-Israeli question has in American and most Western calculations of national interest.

"The Oslo process was initially launched because both sides saw it as offering them meaningful national gains, in return for significant concessions to the other side. The process has stalled because the symmetry of diplomatic benefits has ended, and the balance sheet of priority actions has shifted towards the Israeli side."

The Oslo process that has now stalled for nearly half a year will be revived in the coming weeks and months, but it is unlikely to move much further if the current imbalances in the process itself remain intact. The primary imbalance, which we have seen manifested, yet again, during this latest crisis, is that the Oslo process holds Palestinian national rights hostage to the priority achievement of Israeli rights, mainly the Israeli rights to recognition and security. In the wake of the Netanyahu government's headline policies and the American government's nonchalance, the Oslo process has been collectively interpreted by its non-Arab participants primarily as a means of assuring Israel's political and economic acceptance in the region and its physical security. These are reasonable and logical goals that must be achieved, but they cannot be the sole or prerequisite goals of the process, leaving the achievement of Palestinian national rights and other Arab states' rights as a possible future spinoff or accessory to Israel's national rights.

Moving directly to the final status issues in the Israeli-Palestinian talks, as the United States has just suggested, will magnify rather than overcome this fundamental

imbalance. If the principal parties to the peace-making process do not quickly redress the political imbalances that have become so obvious and so destructive, the current cycle of extremism, stalemate and violence will inevitably transform itself again into prolonged warfare. The bombs in Israel will increase, not decrease, as many of us in the Arab World have said for many years. The most troubling and unfair imbalance is the approach that seeks to guarantee Israeli rights and security while offering the Palestinians only the possibility of achieving some of their rights as a delayed reward for their good behaviour.

Those who continue to bomb Israeli civilians do so more out of a sense of deep indignity and despair than out of any inherent desire to kill Israelis or Jews. Many in Israel and the United States would like to maintain the focus of the peace-making discussions on the question of Arab terror and Israeli security. Those are two important issues that must be resolved to the satisfaction of all, in accordance with international law. But they are only two out of many other core issues that have to be addressed and resolved, including the issues of Palestinian national rights, the status of the Palestinian refugees, the sovereign territorial rights of Syria and Lebanon, and other such issues.

If Dennis Ross plans to spend most of his time this week convincing Yasser Arafat of the urgent need to curb Palestinian terror against Israelis, his mission will only deepen the rut in which the peace-making process has got stuck. The Oslo process was initially launched because both sides saw it as offering them meaningful national gains, in return for significant concessions to the other side. The process has stalled because the symmetry of diplomatic benefits has ended, and the balance sheet of priority actions has shifted towards the Israeli side. The terror bombings against Israelis must stop; the terror of Israeli settlements and national disenfranchisement of the Palestinians must also stop.

Would-be mediators who aspire to more than diplomatic theatre or hallucinogenics should focus on achieving balanced, meaningful and simultaneous gains for both sides, rather than rushing to respond to the understandable concerns of one side. This is the difference between a peace process designed to achieve lasting and fair peace, and a television spectacle designed to make you feel good for a few moments. In this city, the difference is often hard to spot.

'The guns may be silent at the moment but the war goes on by other means'

By G. H. Jansen

THIS WEEKEND, through its envoy Dennis Ross, the U.S. will exert tremendous pressure on the Palestinians in an effort to relaunch the moribund peace process. But the pressure already being exerted on the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) may be too much and do irreparable harm to the Palestinian leadership in the absence of similar pressure on Israel, the source of all the difficulties the peace process is now facing.

The suicide bombers who devastated a west Jerusalem market on July 30, killing a dozen Israelis and wounding 170, piled an almost unbearable weight of pressure on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. For at the very moment the two bombs exploded in the Mahane Yehuda market, Arafat was being squeezed from three directions to resume the peace process on terms acceptable to Israel and counter-squeezed by the Higher Committee of his own Fatah movement to resume only if Israel freezes settlement activity and agrees to implement the provisions of the Oslo accords. At the same time, Arafat was being pressed harder than ever by his own people and by their parliament to clean up corruption and inefficiency in his own government.

The first of the parties pressuring Arafat is, of course, Israel which wants to resume political negotiations, particularly on the fundamental "final status" issues of Jerusalem, refugees, settlements and borders. But Israel wants to do so without any strings attached. That is, without delivering on the commitments the previous Labour government made when it signed the two Oslo accords providing for the five-year period of self-rule, Israeli withdrawal and negotiations on "final status." The aim of Israel's game is to get the Palestinians to the table and compel them to accept the dictate of the Netanyahu government which has made it clear it does not expect to turn over more than 40 per cent of the West Bank to the PNA. Such an offer is completely unacceptable to the PNA and the Palestinian people.

In addition, as a result of the Mahane Yehuda bombing, Israel is demanding, once again, that Arafat exert what it considers "100 per cent effort" against "terrorism" before negotiations can resume. And until he agrees to this demand, Israel will seal off the Palestinian enclaves, block Palestinians from their jobs in Israel and refuse to pay the PNA what it owes in taxes collected from Palestinians. The Palestinians are once again under siege.

The second pressuring party is the U.S. which is, reportedly, prepared to request Israel to freeze settlement activity (either at the controversial Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa site or throughout the West Bank and Gaza) for six months, to implement certain confidence-building provisions of the Oslo accords and proceed with the second West Bank redeployment if Arafat resumes high-level security cooperation with the Israeli general security services, suspended since March when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered construction to begin at the Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement. On the surface, this looks like a good deal for the Palestinians. But it is not certain how far the Clinton administration is prepared to go to ensure that Israel will do all the things Washington plans to promise on its behalf. Netanyahu has already said no to the settlement freeze, without which there can be no full scale resumption of talks. And all the more so after the Mahane Yehuda bombing for two mysterious Palestinians have laid down their lives to protest the present situation of their people.

As a way to exert pressure on the PNA, Congress went on vacation without approving funding or the continued operation of the PNA's representation in the U.S. capital.

The third party is Egypt which has been trying to gain credit with Washington by asserting itself as a mediator between Palestinians and Israel. Last week's pre-bomb success of a modest agreement to resume talking at the level of three committees was due to the Egyptian effort. These meetings have now been suspended, but Egypt is certain to begin nudging Arafat towards agreeing to resume without getting any quid pro quo from Israel.

Against these three powerful parties is people's power. The Fatah Higher Committee, led by Marwan Barghouti, is Arafat's base of popular power in the West Bank. This group met in May in the village of Beit Sahur, near Bethlehem, and took a decision to oppose any return to full-scale negotiations with Israel until settlement activity is halted and Israel begins to implement the Oslo accords. Although Arafat has, on several occasions, attempted to evade this popular edict by agreeing to reopen talks on subsidiary issues, with the aim of moving on to the fundamentals, he has not challenged the Fatah decision. Also, Fatah, the largest faction in parliament, was behind the Legislative Council report which condemned corruption in Arafat's cabinet and demanded the resignation of

all his ministers. Arafat responded to the report by saying he would consider the report; a major cabinet reshuffle is expected.

Perhaps for the first time since the Oslo process was launched in September 1993 Arafat has found himself responding more to his own people than to the powerful outsiders who control the lives of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and determine the destiny of the entire Palestinian state. Adversity piled upon adversity has made Arafat and his people desperate and defiant. The head of Palestinian security in the Gaza Strip, Mohammad Dahlan, took a particularly defiant line when Netanyahu threatened to reoccupy the Palestinian enclaves to prevent further attacks on Israelis. Dahlan stated: "The Palestinian people parted from the occupying forces with flowers and olive branches, but (the Palestinians) will not receive them that way if the IDF (Israel army) comes back into the (liberated) territories." And Dahlan, who speaks for Arafat himself, declared that the PNA would not resume full-scale security cooperation as long as the Israelis impose "closure" on the Palestinian enclaves.

Palestinian Minister of Higher Education Hanan Ashrawi explained why Dahlan has adopted such a

tough line. She said that the Netanyahu government had put the Palestinians into an impossible situation, with no place to turn but to violence. "The back of the entire people is up against the wall," she asserted. Arafat has turned to the U.S., Europe, the United Nations, the Non-Aligned and individual European capitals for succour and relief — but to no effect.

He and his people, said Dr. Ashrawi, are "cornered" in tiny enclaves where the standard of living has fallen by 25 per cent this year, where there is 60 per cent unemployment and 100 per cent despair. This is a mistake, Dr. Ashrawi stated. And not simply because of the violence bred of despair. But because Arafat has a long history of being cornered in very difficult and dangerous situations and he is at his very best as a liberation leader during times of siege. Siege empowers him to rally his people and direct their energies. This is why this past week Arafat invoked the spirit of the battles of Karameh (1968) and of Beirut (1982) when calling upon his people to rally against pressure and siege. The guns may be silent at the moment but the war goes on by other means, by political and diplomatic means.

Journalists who risk death to challenge the culture of silence

By Anthony Lewis

GUATEMALA CITY — In the last 10 years, 173 Latin American reporters, photographers, columnists and editors have been murdered. They were not covering wars or something else that might be considered hazardous duty. They were just doing their ordinary job: trying to publish the truth.

The chilling thing about those murders is that almost none of them have been solved. Official corruption, indifference and threats have prevented serious investigations.

That grim record was the subject of a conference put on in Guatemala City last week by the Inter-American Press Association. Hundreds of journalists, lawyers, politi-

cal figures and others met to call for an end to unpunished crimes against journalists. What made the conference remarkable was testimony about the victims. Widows, colleagues and others told about their lives and deaths.

Jorge Carpio Nicolle, a leading Guatemalan editor, died when 30 hooded men ambushed his car on a remote country road on July 3, 1993. "They asked if he was Jorge Carpio," his widow Marta Arrivillaga de Carpio, said. "Then they shot him. My husband fell in my arms."

Mrs. Carpio, who has taken over as editor of the newspaper El Grafico, said those who ordered the killing remain unknown. The police official in charge of the investigation was murdered, evidence destroyed — and all

this at a time when Jorge Carpio's cousin was president of Guatemala.

Violeta Chamorro, the former president of Nicaragua, spoke of the 1978 murder of her husband, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, an editor who opposed the Somoza dictatorship. He and the others who died, she said, "could have had a safe lifestyle — but they had a commitment to truth."

Many in the conference

"A people without information is a dead people."

had suffered experiences that were painful even to hear described. An Argentine editor's 2-year-old son was kidnapped during that country's dirty war, and never found.

Irma Flaquer Azurdia, a Guatemalan newspaper columnist, was kidnapped in 1980. Her sister, Anabella Flaquer, told how the family had been warned not to investigate her disappearance.

"I have been condemned," she said, "to the torment of not knowing how Irma died."

The focus was on cases from Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia. But others were mentioned, not only in Latin

times had often spoken out against official crimes and abuses. In Colombia, drug lords targeted the press, and drug traffickers working with corrupt officials seem to be doing the same in Mexico. A Mexican editor, Benjamin Flores Gonzalez, was machine-gunned to death just three weeks ago.

It is murder with impunity. To see that is to understand that more is at stake than the lives of journalists. Flagrant killing that goes unpunished rots a society, destroying the people's faith in law.

The purpose of the murders is to send a message — to the press and to all citizens. The message is: Do not disagree with the powerful; do not speak out against evil. Unchallenged, the result would be a silent society, and

that is a terrible price to pay. Rosalina Tuyuc Velásquez, a Mayan member of the Guatemalan Congress, said: "A people without information is a dead people."

The spread of democracy in Latin America has not ended the phenomenon of crimes against the press without punishment. Intolerance of free expression remains despite the fall of authoritarian regimes, and so do corrupt or ineffective police and justice systems.

But there is courage, too — courage that moved those coming from the safety of the United States. Latin journalists are prepared to challenge the culture of silence.

The New York Times

NASA flew to Mars for rocks? Sure

By Amy Harmon

BACK WHEN Apollo 11 allegedly landed on the moon, conspiracy buffs complained that not enough information had been released to tell whether it really had or not.

The sceptics are still ruffled about the moon landing. "Thousands of pictures were taken of the moon during the Apollo missions and yet the public is only shown the same dozen or so — don't you ever wonder why?" one diehard demanded on an Internet news group recently.

Not even the most determined doubter could make the same case for the Mars mission. For three weeks now, earthlings have been bombarded with high-resolution images, press conferences and geological readings. Yet perhaps precisely because of the abundance of information, suspicions about the veracity of the data coming from outer space have soared — especially on the Internet, the information overload.

The amorphous network often fosters the nagging hope that if only all the data on it could be adequately sorted, truth would finally emerge. This is coupled with the utter certainty that such nirvana can never be attained, and thus the peculiarly comforting suspicion that something important is being hidden. And the Pathfinder landing plays right into such binary logic.

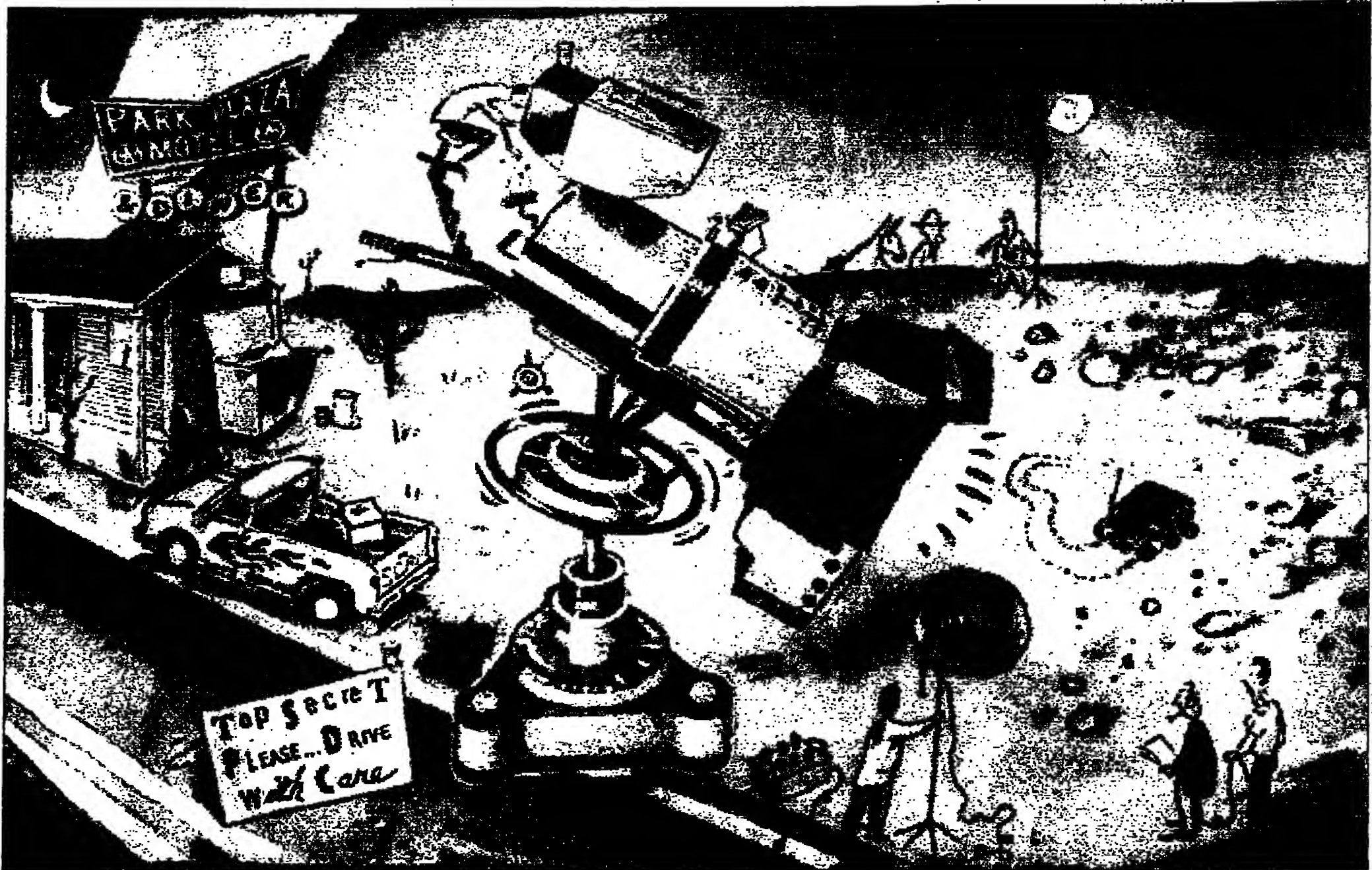
There's such a glut of information anyway that there's a cognitive dissonance," said Richard Metzger, whose World Wide Web site, www.disinfo.com, has been a hub of Mars conjecture. "There's this incredible distrust about what we're being told about everything and it resonates through the whole culture. I think that's a good thing."

With no editing for space, taste or accuracy, speculation can get rather elaborate. Not much gets past the pros in alt.conspiracy, for instance. "Gold on Mars," is the title line of a long exchange on sci.electronics.design. A loud if not necessarily large contingent also continues to bemoan the choice of the Ares Vallis plain as Pathfinder's landing site, over the preferable Cydonia. As perhaps not everyone knows, Cydonia is a rock configuration on the other side of the planet that marks the site of "the monuments and ruins of an ancient civilisation," according to one of several World Wide Web pages on the subject.

But the wide range of Internet theories about the Pathfinder spacecraft's true activities can ultimately be broken down into two basic camps:

1. Pathfinder is nowhere near Mars. If it exists at all, it is most likely in Albuquerque, although possibly Arizona. Or Australia. If you look closely at some of the alleged Mars pictures, you can see a lizard, an Evian bottle or a speckle from the Photoshop computer programme NASA is using to manufacture the pictures. The scientists, or their anonymous backers, or whoever it is that really runs the United States government, anyway, are pocketing the cash.

2. Pathfinder is on Mars, but does the government really think we're stupid enough to believe they would go to this much trouble just to collect a bunch of rocks? If you look closely at some of the pictures you can see a Martian footprint. Or at least some moss. The government has for years covered up previous extraterrestrial contact and this is a) just one more piece of the big lie or b) a transparent attempt to distract attention from the 50th anniversary of the UFO crash in Roswell, N.M., just as that ridiculous



weather balloon story was finally about to bite the dust.

The NASA folks, still stinging from accusations that the Mars Observer spacecraft that disappeared in 1993 was in fact blasted out of space by aliens, don't take kindly to either suggestion, infinite variations of which have been streaming into the Jet Propulsion Laboratory via electronic mail.

"This isn't Capricorn One," said NASA's Kirk Goodall, referring to the 1978 film that portrayed a NASA-orchestrated fake Mars landing on a soundstage in the desert. "This is the first mission when we've released the pictures and results almost immediately. We're not concealing anything."

Perhaps that's the problem. When it comes to things space age, the line

between reality and its various representations has long been easily blurred. Orson Welles's 1938 reading of "War of the Worlds" found an audience all too prepared to believe in its fantastic account. In the 1971 movie "Diamonds Are Forever," James Bond drove a buggy through a 'fake' moonscape in Nevada. And conspiracy aficionados have long contended that the moon land-

ing was staged, filmed by Stanley Kubrick of "2001" fame.

But especially now, believing in aliens or Hollywood special effects may be more palatable than confronting the unsettling realities of what science is capable of. And the deluge of Mars information may make it that much easier to ascribe elusiveness to an obvious truth.

On the other hand, an E-mail message circulated on the Internet recently indicates that maybe the truth is not all that obvious to Martians, either. "Mars Air Force Denies Stories of

UFO Crash," the message began. This was the report: "Valles Marineris (MPI) — A spokesflying for Mars Air Force denounced as false rumours that an alien space craft crashed in the

desert, outside of Ares Vallis. Appearing at a press conference, General Rgrmmmy the Lesser stated that "the object was, in fact, a harmless high-altitude weather balloon, not an alien spacecraft." General Rgrmmmy the Lesser stated that hysterical stories of a detachable vehicle roaming across the Martian desert were blatant fiction, provoked by incidences involving swamp gas.

But the general public has been slow to accept the Air Force's explanation of recent events, preferring to speculate on the 'other-worldly' nature of the crash debris. Conspiracy theorists have condemned Rgrmmmy's statements as evidence of 'an obvious government cover-up, pointing out that Mars has no swamps.'

The New York Times



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Oil income seen lower for Arab Gulf states in 1997

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states are likely to earn less from oil exports in 1997 as their output has not changed and the average crude prices could be more than \$2 lower than in 1996, experts said Monday.

But the income of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which controls more than 45 per cent of the world's extractable oil wealth, is projected to remain higher than the level forecast in annual budgets, which had predicted even lower oil prices.

Ihsan Abu Holeika, a Saudi economist, said, "I am not optimistic about reports that the (average) oil price could reach \$18 (a barrel) this year."

"I expect prices to be lower than that level because of several factors. They include Iraq's return to the market, slackening demand in the third quarter, and excess output by some oil producers," he told AFP.

So far this year, the price of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries's (OPEC) basket of seven crudes has averaged around \$19, higher than the average recorded

in the same period of 1996 but lower by nearly \$1 than the price for the whole of 1996.

Oil executives said they expected prices to range between \$17 and \$18 in 1997 as they will likely slip in the third quarter but pick up in the following three months when demand recovers in the northern hemisphere.

At such a price range, the six GCC countries would earn between \$71 billion and \$75 billion compared with a 13-year high of nearly \$82 billion in 1996, when the average price was as strong as \$20.2 a barrel.

The GCC states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — produce around 13.5 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude, of which nearly 11.5 million bpd are exported.

About 6.5 million bpd are supplied by Saudi Arabia, which produces nearly eight million bpd in line with its OPEC quota.

The output of the six GCC states, four of which are OPEC members, has remained almost unchanged over the past three years as they contin-

ued to stick to their shares in fear of a price collapse.

Despite the expected decline in their oil income, it remains higher than budget projections as most members had forecast even lower oil prices.

"That does not necessarily mean their budget deficits will disappear as most members have always shown inability to restrain expenditure when oil prices are high," a Gulf-based oil analyst said.

Oil prices have already lost more than \$6 a barrel since the start of the year and are expected to weaken further when Iraqi crude begins to hit the market.

Iraq, under a U.N. embargo for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, is expected to resume limited crude sales within a week after reaching an agreement with the United Nations over the price formula.

The accord was reached after a two-month suspension in Iraqi exports.

Experts said the resumption of Iraqi oil supplies would affect the already glutted market, but they ruled out a sharp decline in prices.

Israeli ministers fail to agree budget proposals

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's government failed to approve the treasury's 1998 budget proposal on Monday after two days of debate, officials said.

Cabinet members debated a proposed 2.5 billion shekel budget cut and nearly 100 measures for structural reform in the economy, including privatising government-owned companies, reforming capital markets and liberalising foreign currency policy.

Trade and Industry Minister Natan Sharansky told the meeting that the treasury's proposals failed to provide solutions to "the critical problems of the Israeli economy in the near term," according to a ministry statement.

Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy expressed concern at some of the reforms proposed and said only a few of the ministers have had a chance to speak since the discussions began on Sunday.

Other cabinet members said in the second day of talks that budgets of their ministries could not be cut.

Israel Radio said the cabinet would probably reconvene on Wednesday for more discussion on the proposed budget which ministers are expected to finalise by Aug. 31. It must be approved in parliament by year-end.

Bank of Israel Governor Yaacov Frenkel pressed the ministers at the meeting to lower the government's inflation target for next year to between six and nine per cent, the central bank said in a statement.

"There is no reason that Israeli citizens should continue suffering from high inflation at a significantly greater rate than that of developed countries and many developing countries in the world," the statement quoted Mr. Frenkel as saying.

Finance Minister Yaacov Neeman announced on Sunday the target would remain at this year's level of seven to 10 per cent, adding that inflation was now running at an annual rate of 9.5 to 10 per cent.

Mr. Frenkel also asked ministers to guarantee the government stick to its commitment to keep the budget deficit at 2.4 per cent of gross domestic product next year.

Treasury officials say proposed structural changes in the economy will increase competition and efficiency.

Cyprus forecasts three per cent economic growth for this year

NICOSIA (AFP) — The economy in Cyprus is showing "relative recovery" and growth could reach three per cent this year barring unforeseen political developments, Finance Minister Christodoulos Christodoulos said Monday.

He said that would exceed the estimated gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of two per cent for 1996, a year marked by inter-communal violence, the

official Cyprus News Agency (CNA) reported.

Mr. Christodoulos also said liberalisation of the financial system would take place before talks begin on Cyprus's membership of the European Union (EU) and would be concluded by March 1998.

He said public debt is estimated at 54 per cent of GDP, under the 60 per cent limit set by the EU's Maastricht Treaty. Unemployment was

forecast at 3.3 to 3.4 per cent this year and inflation at around 3.5 per cent, he said.

The tourism industry, which represents about 20 per cent of GDP, is recovering.

Mr. Christodoulos said, adding that its performance over the next three or four months should be an improvement over the same period last year.

But Mr. Christodoulos said that despite the economy's "healthy base" Cyprus should turn from traditional areas to develop new sectors such as education, health, business consultancies and industrial products.

In July, Cyprus Central Bank Governor Afentis Afentis said he expected GDP to grow 2.5 per cent in 1997 if the rebound in the tourism sector continued.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF
US Dollar	1.8561	0.8289	1.5220	115.73	1.3929	1808.30	2.0887
DE Mark	0.5388	-	0.3385	0.8200	0.7501	974.51	1.1260
GB Sterling	1.5900	2.9495	-	2.4199	183.52	2.2147	2874.36
CH Franc	0.6570	1.2181	0.4128	-	76.00	0.9142	1188.14
JP Yen	0.0086	1.6031	0.5423	1.3146	-	1.2031	15.84
CA Dollar	0.7179	1.3283	0.4527	1.0854	1.20	-	1.2843
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0247	0.3470	0.0840	1586.91	0.7690	-
NL Guilder	0.4788	88.77	0.3004	72.77	55.29	0.8658	865.31
FR Franc	0.1601	0.2967	0.1005	24.3405	18.49	0.2227	33.43

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF
US Dollar	1.8561	0.8289	1.5220	115.73	1.3929	1808.30	2.0887
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	0.7080	3.7505	0.3770	3.6398	0.3049
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1888	-	0.5325	5.1410	0.4306	3.6729
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.6760	0.9485	-	0.97	0.8813	0.98
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.8086	9.74
Kuwait Dinar	3.2798	2.3221	1.2308	1.2384	11.94	-	1.01
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0266	0.9910	0.0830	1.01
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4597	2.4354	0.2448	2.3635	0.1880	2.3850
Egyptian	0.2948	0.2087	1.1055	0.1111	1.0729	0.0899	1.0827

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF
US Dollar	1.8561	0.8289	1.5220	115.73	1.3929	1808.30	2.0887
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.1888	-	0.5325	5.1410	0.4306	3.6729
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0266	0.9910	0.0830	1.01
KW Dinar	3.2798	2.3221	1.2308	1.2384	11.94	-	1.01
BH Dinar	0.2770	0.1928	1.0211	1.0266	0.9910	0.0830	1.01
CY Pound	1.3309	3.3943	1.1497	2.7847	211.636	-	-

Commodity	Unit	Price	Change
Gold (oz's)	327.3	327.3	-
Silver (oz's)	4.43	4.45	-
Platinum (oz's)	444	447	-
AL (3 Months)	1748	1750	-
CU (3 Months)	2272	2274	-
Zinc (3 Months)	1544	1545	-
Lead (3 Months)	603	605	-
Ni (3 Months)	6860	6870	-

Main Equity Indices						
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	% Chg
New York	DOW JONES	8012.4	-18.82	-0.23	8041.9	7995.45
New York	S&P 500	930.99	-2.55	-0.27	935.66	929.43
London	FT-SE 100	5031.9	0.6	0.01	5051.1	4966.4
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	18824.18	-780.28	-3.98	19462.4	18824.2
Paris	CAC 40	2983.44	-12.83	-0.43	3004.58	2983.63
Frankfurt	DAX	4333.13	-21.02	-0.48	4355.8	4312.35

Commodity	Unit	Price	Change
Coffee (cib's)	197.33	197.33	-
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1508	1508	-
Sugar (\$/ton)	339	339	-
Wheat (\$/ton)	146	146	-
Soya (cib's)	21.77	21.77	-
Tea (cib's)	165	165	-
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	0	-
Rice (\$/ton)	460	460	-

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Keep — on (watch)
- Tibetan monk
- Amo. —, amat
- Citrus fruit
- Dud
- Alencon
- Brilliant
- Concerning
- Windstorm
- Into separate parts
- Sault — Marie
- Malicious look
- Tchrs.' org.
- Chum
- Singer Tennille
- Guava
- Revolting?
- Decrease
- Engrosses
- Pleases
- American humorist
- Dynamite
- Alaskan island
- Charge for service
- Timetable abbr.
- Engine track
- Pretty — picture
- All together
- Puts in
- Enjoy a book
- Boxers
- Bamako's land
- Mosaic pieces
- Much of the earth
- Tip
- Nineties
- Sports group

DOWN

- Clusters
- Tag on a lace
- Censure
- Oaf, for short
- Pacific island
- " — Camera"
- Lisa
- Social insects
- Dress style
- Compulsory
- Port of Israel
- Clairvoyant
- Worthless one
- Composer
- Bartok
- Entities
- Map abbr.
- Persian fairy
- Harem rooms
- Sharp point
- Hick
- Donkey
- Fictional sleuth
- Mexican dish
- Fr. of ill temper
- Lytton heroine
- Concorde, e.g.
- Autocrats
- Immature newt
- Continental prefix
- The end
- "Born Free" lioness
- Point of origin
- Assistants
- Came up
- Narrow channel
- Indian state
- Ms. Bombeck
- Kind of tide
- Non-coms
- Lamb
- Coup d'—
- High mountain

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Peanuts

MARCIE, WHAT DO I DO AFTER I FINISH READING THE BOOKS ON THIS LIST?

WRITE A REPORT ON EACH ONE.

SURE, MARCIE...

TELL THE TEACHER HOW MUCH YOU LIKED THEM...

SURE, MARCIE...

Andy Capp

TCH, TCH, THE SLEEP YOU MISS, PET, WAITING UP FOR ME—

I SUGGEST YOU TAKE THE MORNING OFF WORK AND HAVE A LIE-IN

THANKS

WE'LL FORGIVE A LOT IF THEY COME UP WITH AT LEAST ONE SENSIBLE REMARK IN THE COURSE OF TWENTY-FOUR HOURS

Mutt'n Jeff

MUTT, THIS IS YOUR BALL, THAT ONE'S MINE!

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Richter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Avoid tense encounter today between out-of-town and close friend or there could be a great conflict. Also avoid others' disagreements. Plan a new budget, don't overspend thereby you will have extra funds.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) It's an optimum time today to gain better security. Potential for friction with others over money matters can exist, pay bills thereby you will handle all of your obligations. Later this evening will be good to meet with knowledgeable people.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Follow through on agreements left hanging before another makes it harder. Look among younger persons for assistance with a project. Tonight will be a good time for you to go out on the town with close friends.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Devote time to both old business affairs and new today, both are worthwhile. Avoid disagreements between your mate and a fellow associate or there could be a conflict which could put you in the dog house.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You are torn between creative ideas and more personal aims today, follow what is important. Try to improve intimacies with your loved ones and thereby you can have a wonderful relationship with them.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Stay calm, keep promises which you have made at your career activities. Your superior may hinder progress temporarily, however, things will improve. New love interest awakens in your relationship with your mate.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Out-of-town correspondence proves important today, make this a priority. Tasks should move smoothly for you thereby you can progress quite successfully. Later this evening will be a good time to meet with fellow associates.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You can question the experts of whatever is your career activities and thereby gain the insight of their wisdom. Use your own ideas for finances today. A neglected matter needs tending at home. Retire early.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a good time to help friends with any difficulties. Move on a plan to assist a nervous friend. Be sure you know what you want before looking for a friend's cooperation with any responsibilities.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Clear your mind at career activities today by dealing with neglected difficulties, thereby they will disappear. Listen to complaints of your mate, however, do not do anything about them at this time, or a conflict could arise.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) An old mentor shows you how today to best handle a personal difficulty, so listen carefully. Rejoice and socialise with clever friends later this evening thereby you can have a good time at recreational activities.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You can solve personal matters before business today and thereby eliminate any difficulties. Demonstrate to your loved ones how much they mean by doing something special for them. Keep an open mind toward the young.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

Oman rep

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Oman reported a surge in oil exports as the Gulf states push ahead with economic reforms to spur growth and cushion the oil price shock.

The figure is set to rise from 200 million barrels a day to 250 million barrels a day by the end of the year as more oil fields are brought on line, said a spokesman for the Ministry of Oil.

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Oman reports surge in investment

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Oman has reported a surge in investment as the Gulf country pushes ahead with economic reforms to spur growth and cushion the impact of volatile oil export earnings.

Around 120 million riyals (\$312 million) were invested in new companies in 1996.

And in the first half of 1997, fresh share flotations attracted nearly 134 million riyals (\$348.4 million), said Mahmoud Al Jarwani, executive president of the Muscat Securities Market (MSM).

"The figure is set to climb to between 200 million and 250 million riyals (\$520-\$650 million) by the end of this year as more companies will be created by the private sector," he told AFP.

"We consider this year as the real beginning of our 1996-2000 development plan, which is a landmark five-year blueprint in our economic diversification drive," Mr. Jarwani said.

His figures showed that turnover in MSM jumped to around 565 million riyals (\$1.47 billion) during the first half of 1997, from under 122 million riyals (\$317 million) during the first six months of last year.

The listed companies have also increased to 110 from 98 at the end of 1996, and their market capitalisation grew to nearly two billion riyals (\$5.2 billion) up by around 300 million riyals (\$780 million).

The index also soared by nearly 60 per cent in the first half of 1997.

Oman, a small non-OPEC oil producer, has launched sweeping reforms to activate its economy and lessen reliance on crude exports. They include privatisation, improvement of investment laws, tax exemptions and more incentives for the private sector. It is also the first Arab Gulf country to allow foreigners to have full ownership in some projects.

Foreign investment in Oman gained momentum after it expanded participation of expatriates in local shareholdings to 49 per cent three years ago.

Mr. Jarwani said 12 new private ventures had just been approved while applications for 18 other companies are under discussion.

"There is an investment influx ... There are several factors for this, including reforms, better tax laws, the implementation of large projects and the government's tendency to encourage the private sector," he said.

pressing ahead with planned multi-billion-dollar ventures in participation with the private sector. They involve the gas liquefaction project, petrochemical, sewage and other projects," he added.

After setting up the first private power company in the Gulf, Oman has just embarked on measures to establish the first company to undertake sewage work, Mr. Jarwani said, adding the venture involved large investments.

Two other major projects were a company to oversee services for the new port of Raysut and the Omani Alliance Bank, which will focus on housing loans.

"The floated shares for that bank were nine million riyals (\$23 million). But subscription reached 780 million riyals (\$2 billion). This shows the confidence of investors in the economy," Mr. Jarwani said.

Arab Potash Company reports sharp decline in mid-year net profit

By Samir Ghawi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The net profit of the Arab Potash Company at the end of June 1997 amounted to JD8 million which is 53 per cent below the JD16.8 million posted at the end of June 1996, figures released Monday show.

According to mid-year financial results and statements issued by the company, potash production also declined during the first half of his year as it amounted to 614,645 tonnes, 24 per cent less than the 805,476 tonnes produced during the first half of 1996.

Sales were also lower by 11 per cent as the company was able to market only 657,995 tonnes compared to 736,113 tonnes during the first half of 1996.

The company attributed the fall in production to the shortage of Carnallite deposits (the necessary raw material in potash production) in the solar pans. It expected production to reach 1.65 million tonnes by the end of 1997 according to the plan.

The Arab Potash Company (APC) said in its report that the deposits of the Carnallite will climb

again over the coming few years after reworking Carnallite pan C4, the work on which was completed this year.

The APC said that production will also increase in 1999 as work is nearing completion on a new saline pan.

Due to the decline in production and sales, earnings fell by 19.6 per cent from JD55.7 million during the first six months of 1996 to JD46.7 million during the first half of this year.

Of the JD46.7 million, JD44.8 million were net earnings from potash sales and the remaining JD1.9 million came from bank interest and sales of Carnallite and salt.

"The decline in the earnings of potash sales by 15.5 per cent is due to lower sales and international prices," the APC said.

The company also suffered from higher costs as the cost per tonne increased from JD52,010 to JD57,257. The APC explained that that was due to lower output especially when noting that more than 80 per cent of

the operational costs are fixed costs.

The total costs during the first six months of 1997 amounted to JD37.7 million of which JD26.7 million were operational costs and JD4.1 million expenses of the Aquaba warehouses. Other costs were JD2.9 million in financing expenses, JD2.7 million trucks' expenses and JD1.16 million in expenses of the Amman office.

The 1997 mid-year financial results show total fixed assets and work in progress at JD324.4 million (JD293.3 million in 1996) as a result of higher spending on the new saline pan and the industrial potash projects in addition to other schemes.

Cash in hand and at banks totalled JD16.6 million (JD30.9 million in 1996) as a result of lower earnings, repayments of loans and payments on the projects mentioned earlier. There was no drawdowns of new loans.

As of June 30, 1997 APC was saddled with loans totalling JD43.6 million (JD49.1 million on June 30, 1996).

The financial results showed total shareholding equity at JD211.3 million (JD201.8 million) of which JD79.7 million is APC's registered and paid-up capital.

The APC distributed JD15.9 million in dividends last year at a rate of 20 per cent after having recorded a JD33.1 million net profit after tax in 1996. The net profit was 30.2 per cent higher than the JD27.4 million posted in 1995.

Before tax, the net profit amounted to JD45.08 million compared to JD42.10 million in 1995.

APC Board Chairman Ali Ensour told the general assembly that the company was able to produce 1.765 million tonnes and market 1.750 million tonnes in 1996 despite the lower international demand for potash by about two million from the 1995 level.

Noting that the APC sales in 1996 were lower by 0.6 per cent from the 1995 sales, the chairman attributed the lower world demand to high inventories in India and China which did not sign any new contracts until late last year.

U.S. okays rules to cut costs of overseas phone calls

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. federal regulators have approved rules aimed at slashing the price of overseas phone calls and saving American consumers and businesses \$17 billion through the year 2003.

The nation's top phone regulator said the move — coupled with a recent global trade pact on telecommunications — will cut the average price of an international call from the United States to 20 cents a minute from 88 cents over five years.

"Eighty-eight cents a minute makes international telephone calls prohibitively expensive for many, many Americans," Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Reed Hundt said.

"This is a nation of immigrants. People ought to be able to phone home and they shouldn't have to be 'ET' to do that," Mr. Hundt said, referring to the movie Alien who cobbled together a phone from Earth to contact his fellow aliens.

The FCC order sets

"benchmarks" to push down the so-called "settlement" rates that U.S. phone companies will be allowed to pay foreign carriers to complete U.S.-originated calls. The FCC will not permit U.S. carriers to pay above the benchmarks, a move likely to anger foreign companies and governments.

The benchmark targets — which range from 15 cents to 23 cents a minute — are sharply below the level many overseas state-run phone monopolies charge to complete calls.

FCC officials complain those charges far exceed actual costs, enabling foreign governments to subsidise their phone monopolies unfairly.

The benchmarks will vary depending on a foreign country's income level, with richer countries facing lower benchmarks than low-income nations such as Bangladesh or Zaire.

The new rules take effect at the start of next year, with carriers from wealthy nations — such as Austria and Japan — facing the 15-cent-a-

minute benchmark on Jan. 1, 1999.

Long-distance carriers such as ATT Corp. and Sprint Corp. hailed the new rules.

But not all were pleased. "It's going to upset foreign governments and foreign carriers. They unanimously told the FCC not to act in such a unilateral fashion," said Alfred Manlet of Steptoe Johnson, who represents foreign carriers.

The FCC said the 88 cents a minute that U.S. consumers now pay for an international call is more than six times the cost of the average domestic long-distance call, even though the costs of the calls are not much different.

"Our benchmarks will lead to much lower settlement rates, and thereby promote competition and lower costs for consumers," Peter Cowhey, head of the FCC's international bureau, said at a public meeting where the rules were adopted.

U.S. carriers in 1996 paid about \$3.4 billion

more than foreign carriers paid their U.S. counterparts to complete calls. That deficit has nearly doubled since 1990, reflecting in part the inflated costs charged by overseas carriers as well as the large immigrant population in the United States that makes overseas calls, FCC officials said.

The FCC said Mexico, China, India, the Philippines and Colombia had the biggest payment disparities last year.

Despite their unilateral nature, FCC officials insisted the new rules would not provoke retaliatory actions by overseas governments.

Chairman Hundt said his agency was able to convince foreign governments that if they did not go along with the benchmarks and lower their rates, cheaper phone traffic directed over the Internet would force them to do so.

"We were able to use the Internet as a wedge," he said.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Nablu proves to be very active and profitable for Jordan Kuwait Bank

** AFTER HAVING recorded a JD2.9 million net profit last year, the general assembly of the Jordan Kuwait Bank has approved capitalising JD4.5 million of the voluntary reserves and retained earnings by giving the shareholders a 45 per cent of a share as a bonus. The bank intends to float 5.5 million shares for private or public subscription. Board Chairman Sufian Sartawi said recently.

The 1996 net profit was JD1.5 million higher than the net profit posted in 1995. Shareholders' equity was also higher at the end of last year as it went up from JD19.9 million to JD22 million.

Total deposits of clients increased by JD29 million, or 15 per cent, to reach JD222 million and credit facilities rose by JD19 million, or 16.2 per cent to JD135.7 million. Total assets were 1.4 per cent higher as they amounted to JD279.3 million, JD118.8 million of which were deposits at banks.

The Jordan Kuwait Bank's portfolio of securities for trading purposes declined from JD8.2 million to JD7.1 million after the management decided to minimise the volume due to the sharp fall in share prices. The bank had taken a JD489,000 reserve allocation against prices falling. At the same time, the bank increased its portfolio of securities for investment purposes from JD3.8 million in 1995 to JD4.6 million in 1996.

According to Mohammed Yasser Al Asmar, the bank's general manager, the Nablu branch in the Palestinian territories accounted for JD0.5 million of the bank's total operational profit which amounted to JD10.5 million last year. The Nablu branch had a share of 4.2 per cent with the remaining 95.8 per cent spread over the remaining branches.

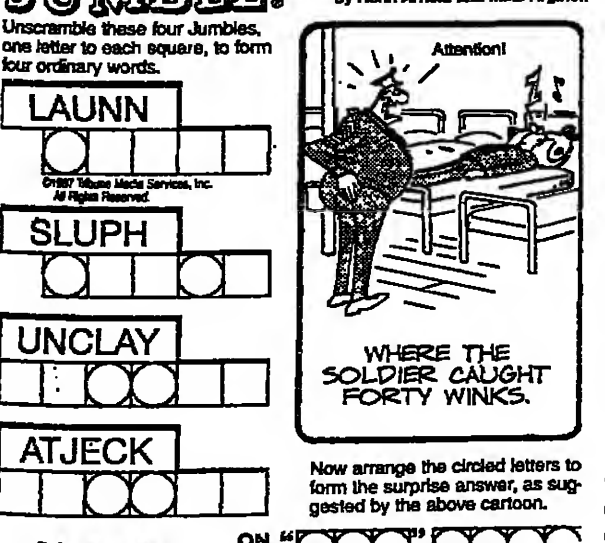
Mr. Asmar said the Nablu branch attracted JD8.3 million of deposits, or 3.8 per cent of the increase in deposits, noting that the branch started operations in early 1996.

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"Doctors won't let us eat or drink anything we like. I think they're hoarding all the good stuff for themselves!"

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME



Yesterday's Jumbles: SIEGE EXILE KENNEL ASYLUM
Answer: What the zoo keepers found when the wild cat escaped — THE MISSING LYNX

Japan's direct investment abroad hits six-year high in first half of '97

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese direct investment overseas soared 26.4 per cent year-on-year in the first half of 1997 to its highest level in six years, the finance ministry has said.

Direct investment totalled 1,611 billion yen (\$15.1 billion) in the first six months of the year, the biggest six-month figure since 2,651 billion yen was invested directly overseas in the first half of 1991.

The figure was up from 1,275 billion yen invested directly overseas in areas such as joint ventures in the first half of 1996 and 1,273 billion in the second half of 1996.

But the latest Japanese direct overseas investment figure was still well short of the record 4,238 billion yen posted in first half of 1990, according to central bank data.

Foreign direct investment in Japan totalled just 170 billion yen in the first half of 1997, up from 99.5 billion yen in first half of 1996 and from 134 billion yen in the second half of 1996.

Japanese portfolio investment overseas totalled 8,870 billion yen in the first half of 1997, up from 7,691 billion yen in the second half of 1996 and

from 4,831 billion yen in the first half of 1996.

Japanese investment in overseas stocks in first half of 1997 totalled 1,240 billion yen, up from 433 billion yen in the last six months of 1996 and 472 billion yen in first half 1996.

Investment from Japan in overseas debt securities totalled 7,630 billion yen, up from 7,259 billion yen in the previous six months and 4,359 billion yen in the first half of 1996.

Foreign portfolio investment in Japan totalled 4,354 billion yen in the first half of 1997, up from 2,161 billion yen in the previous six months but down from 5,848 billion yen in first six months of 1996.

Of the total, foreign investors poured 3,054 billion yen into Japanese stocks, up from 584 billion yen in second half of 1996 but down from 4,714 billion yen in the first half of 1996.

They invested 1,300 billion yen in debt securities in the first half of the year, down from 1,576 billion yen in the second half of 1996 but up from 1,134 billion yen in first half of 1996.

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Athletics witnesses changing of the guard as World Championships end

ATHENS (AFP) — The 6th World Athletics Championships which finished Sunday evening heralded the changing of the guard in the sport's most glamorous events — the sprints.

It was time for the young pretenders to be crowned. American Maurice Greene climaxed his sensational season with a stunning win in the 100m final.

The 23-year-old held off Canadian defending champion Donovan Bailey to cross the line in 9.86secs, equalling the championship record.

"I knew I could be the number one man in the world," announced a beaming Greene to the world.

"I just feel very excited. The lord helped me run the fastest race of my life. Now my next goal is to get the world record," he added.

The victory made Greene the first American sprinter to win the championship since Carl Lewis in Tokyo in 1991.

Marion Jones' victory in the women's 100m was the climax to a fairytale return to the sport she prefers.

For the past three years the 21-year-old has helped North Carolina win the NCAA basketball title but after breaking her leg twice late last year — an injury that needed a permanent screw to be inserted in her left leg — she turned her mind back to track.

In 1992 she was fifth in the World Junior Championships and qualified for the Olympics but decided not to go.

She yearned to return to running.

"I wanted to come back. In basketball there is a lot of finger pointing but in track it is up to you. No one else to blame," she explained.

Within 14 weeks she had won the U.S. championship with the fastest run of her life with a 10.90 and a new sprint queen was in the making.

She was crowned in Athens.

Ato Boldon finally showed he could perform as well on the track as he could off it by taking the 200 metres crown.

The extrovert 23-year-old Trinidadian, three times a bronze medalist in the Olympics and the 1995 World Championships, has always been unafraid to say how he feels and what he is going to do but when it dawned on him that he had actually won gold he was unusually downbeat.

The only tarnish on his gold was that world record holder Michael Johnson had decided to opt out of the 200m and run only the 400 metres.

Ukraine's Zhanna Pintsushevich wiped away the heartache of her 100 metre defeat by winning the 200m title.

The 25-year-old came



Hanne Haugland of Norway clears the bar in the women's high jump final at the World Athletics Championships. Haugland won gold with a jump of 1.99 metres (Reuters photo)

Final World Athletics Championship medal standings after Sunday's events

Country	G	S	B	Total
United States	7	3	8	18
Germany	5	1	4	10
Cuba	4	1	1	6
Kenya	3	2	2	7
Ukraine	2	4	1	7
Morocco	2	1	1	4
Czech Republic	2	0	0	2
Norway	2	0	0	2
Russia	1	4	3	8
Spain	1	3	1	5
Portugal	1	2	1	4
Australia	1	1	2	4
Italy	1	1	1	3
Romania	1	1	1	3
South Africa	1	1	0	2
Canada	1	1	0	2
Poland	1	1	0	2
France	1	0	1	2
Japan	1	0	1	2
Mexico	1	0	1	2
Denmark	1	0	0	1
Ethiopia	1	0	0	1
New Zealand	1	0	0	1
Sweden	1	0	0	1
Trinidad	1	0	0	1
Great Britain	0	5	1	6
Jamaica	0	3	4	7
Belarus	0	2	2	4
Greece	0	1	1	2
Lithuania	0	1	1	2
Bulgaria	0	1	0	1
Finland	0	1	0	1
Namibia	0	1	0	1
Nigeria	0	1	0	1
Uganda	0	1	0	1
Sri Lanka	0	1	0	1
Bahamas	0	0	1	1
Brazil	0	0	1	1
Mozambique	0	0	1	1
Slovakia	0	0	1	1
Switzerland	0	0	1	1
	44	45	43	132

through in the final metres to pass pre-race favourite Merlene Ottey, who was also overtaken by 20-year-old Susanthika Jayasinghe of Sri Lanka.

For Merlene Ottey, attempting to take her third successive 200m title, it was a stunning upset.

Before the final she said it was a miracle she could still compete at this level aged 37 and would carry on as long as the miracle continued.

Third place here proved that age had finally caught

up with Ottey, the oldest ever World Championships medalist.

It was the young guard who also dominated the men's middle and long distance events.

Wilson Kipketer of Denmark, the joint world record-holder, retained his 800 metres title.

The 25-year-old Kenyan-born Kipketer, who broke the world indoor record twice in three days in March and followed up by equalling Sebastian Coe's outdoor record, clocked 1min 43.38sec to take one of the most predictable

gold medals of the championships.

Ethiopia's dual world record holder Haile Gebrselassie won his third successive 10,000 metres title.

The 24-year-old Gebrselassie was simply in a class of his own.

Kenya's 3,000 metres world record-holder Daniel Komen won his first senior gold medal in the 5,000m.

The only blot on the 21-year-old Kenyan's copy book was he failed to break Gebrselassie's world record.

But it was not all youth.

The remarkable Ana Fidelia Quirot of Cuba won

the gold medal in the 800m.

The 34-year-old easily beat the 1993 champion Maria Mutola of Mozambique.

Quirot, who was almost burnt to death in a domestic incident in 1993 which led to her losing her baby, surged past Mutola in the straight to clinch the title.

Quirot, who still bears the physical scars of the fire, had another objective — which proved impossible the way the race was run.

"I wanted the world record but it was too rough a race and I decided that gold was enough for me," she said.

Nezha Bidouane won only the second women's gold medal at a major championship for Morocco by taking the 400 metres hurdles.

Leading quotes from the World Athletics Championships which finished on Sunday:

Drugs

"I'm up to here with pee pee!" — IAAF President Primo Nebiolo putting his hand to the top of his head when asked about doping tests.

British nightmares

"Someone's put a curse on me and I wish they'd lift it." — 1500 metres favourite Kelly Holmes, a member of the British team, after failing to finish her first round heat, because of a week old injury she had been treated for right up to the eve of the event.

Water problems

"This is the time for Nebiolo to prove he really cares about the athletes. If he doesn't then screw Nebiolo!" — Jos Hermens, manager of dual world record holder Haile Gebrselassie, on his ultimatum for water to be sprayed on the track.

"All I want is the track watered. It can't be that difficult to find water," — Gebrselassie on the same question.

Michael Johnson

"He's just a normal human being. He goes to the bathroom everyday just like everyone else." — American 400 metres runner Tyree Washington on Johnson.

"He's got no heart. He's just another body on the track." — Washington on Johnson again.

"There's nothing that fires me up more than someone accusing me of having no heart. Tyree asked for it and he got it." — Johnson after taking 400 metres title with Washington in third.

Donovan Bailey

"My advisors wanted me to pull out but I said that I don't lay down for nobody." — Bailey after losing his 100 metres title and 14 pounds over the past month.

"People who make excuses seldom amount to much." — Maurice Greene, the new 100 metres champion, on Bailey's response to his defeat.

Merlene Ottey

"It's not do or die it's do or don't." — 37-year-old legend, after winning her 200 metres semi-final, on her attitude to the final.

"I'll finish the season and then think about what I'm going to do." — Ottey on possible retirement.

Ato Boldon

"Shit! Shit! Bring me some ice! Ice! What a time to crap up." — Boldon a few hours later after he finished fifth in the final — Greene won in 9.86.

"History will not record that this was one of my worst races, it will record that I was the world champion in 1997." — a gracious Boldon after winning the 200 metres title.

"I am obviously sorry for Fredericks as he is more than a rival but a mentor to me as an example to humanity and a world class sprinter." — Boldon on Frankie Fredericks, silver medalist and 1993 champion.

"They (the United States 4x100 relay team) have the four fastest men ever assembled for a relay. What have the Canadians got? A poor loser who I don't respect." — Boldon on Donovan Bailey.

The 27-year-old Bidouane, who had a miserable championships in Gothenburg two years ago when she was disqualified from the heats and whose husband fell in the steeplechase the next day, had finally answered the doubters.

No athletic World Championships would be complete without drugs, and this one was no different.

Even before the championships began, drugs were in the headlines when the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) decided to reduce the punishment for the cheats.

Serious offenders would only be banned for two years instead of four and athletes caught taking stimulants would get off the first time with a public warning instead of a three month ban.

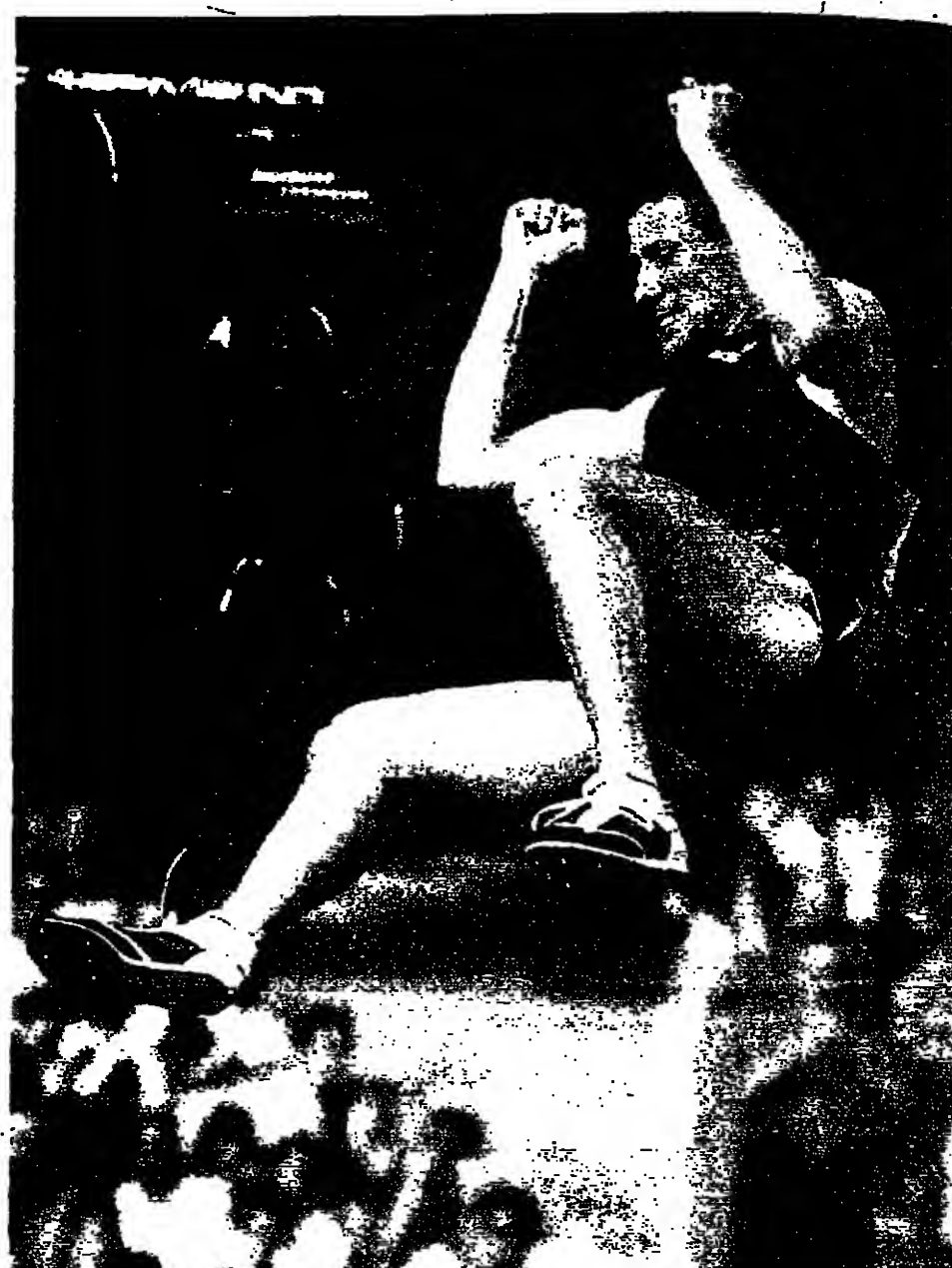
Russia's Olimpiada Ivanova was stripped of her silver medal in the 10-kilometre walk after testing positive for steroids.

Teammate Liubov Tsyoma also tested positive after her semi-final heat in the 800m.

Both were automatically banned for two years.

Ukrainian shot put gold medalist Alexander Bagach was stripped of his gold after being caught taking the stimulant ephedrine and given a public warning.

Also given a public warning after testing positive for ephedrine were 400 metre hurdler Pascal Maran of France and triple jumper Oksana Zelinskaya of Kazakhstan.



Sergei Bubka of the Ukraine celebrates in the air after clearing 5.70 metres during the final of the men's pole vault event at the World Championships in Athletics (Reuters photo)

Super Bubka makes it perfect 6

ATHENS (AFP) — Sergei Bubka of Ukraine made it six world outdoor titles out of six as he took the men's pole vault gold medal at the World Championships Sunday with a clearance of 6.01 metres — a championship record.

The 33-year-old Bubka, who was encouraged by his older brother Vasily to carry on in the sport he has dominated for 14 years after almost retiring last year with an Achilles tendon injury, beat 1992 Olympic champion Maxim Tarasov of Russia, who had a best of 5.96.

Surprise package America's Dean Starkey took bronze on 5.91.

"I am really happy that I managed it today because it was very difficult with all that happened last year," Bubka said.

"Sport has always been very important to me and I have still the hunger to go on that is why I have dominated since 1983 — because I am greedy!" Bubka added.

Bubka, who has just won one Olympic title in 1988, delivered his knockout blow when he vaulted 6.01m at

his first attempt, after failing once apiece at 5.70 and 5.91, leaving Tarasov to try something desperate. Starkey, 30 and was eighth in 1995, excited with two failures at 6.01m.

"I am ecstatic as it is the first American pole vault medal since we took second and third in the 1984 Olympics," he said.

The 26-year-old Tarasov, who was not selected by the Russians to defend his Olympic title last year, attempted 6.06, six centimetres more than he had gone when he joined the elite six metres club in Nice, but failed twice to hand Bubka the title.

"Sergei was too strong for me today. I would have been unhappy with the bronze so I guess you could say it was a satisfactory day," he said.

"I think that Sergei's vault at 6.01m was one of the best I have ever seen him do," he added.

However, Tarasov reopened the animosity between the two medalists by asking Bubka why he hadn't shaken hands before the event.

"Because I thought it was better to wait until the end of the meeting," was Bubka's curt reply.

Bubka, who has said he would like to carry on until the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, looked like he was going to try and break his own world record of 6.14m, which he has retained and improved on since 1984, but pulled out of the 6.15m attempt at the last minute.

"I felt a lot of pressure out there. It is difficult to continue when you have won the gold medal and also with my tendon injury I don't know if I am going to be able to walk tomorrow," he said.

The big disappointment of the night was Olympic champion Jean Galfione of France, who failed to make one successful vault in his three attempts at 5.70m.

"Mentally I just wasn't there. I was thinking about the tendon injury I've been carrying," he said.

"Also I have been unable to get out of my head that I am Olympic champion and I am finding it hard to overcome that," he added.



The members of the Canadian 4x100 metres relay team celebrate their victory at the World Championships in Athletics. Canada won the Gold in 37.86 seconds. (L to R) Bruny Surin, Glenroy Gilbert, Donovan Bailey and Rober Esmie (Reuters photo)

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL:634144 PHILADELPHIA "1" Steven Spielberg's THE LOST WORLD (JURASSIC PARK) Starring: Jeff Goldblum & Julian Moore Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:634144 PHILADELPHIA "2" Jim Carrey ... in LIAR LIAR Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:699238 PLAZA Harrison Ford & Brad Pitt...in DEVIL'S OWN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15 THE ENGLISH PATIENT Shows: 8:30, 10:45	CINEMA TEL:677420 CONCORD The movie event of the summer is here Arnold Schwarzenegger ...in BATMAN & ROBIN (12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30) CONCORD "2" Jim Carrey...in DUMB & DUMBER Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155 The satirical play AMN AI AI YA HO performance starts at 8:30 p.m. The theatre is closed every Friday. For reservations call 625155

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Montreal Aurilla 1 Olympic innings

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individual medley world champion Tom Dolan at the Pan-Pacific Swim in Fukuoka. Dolan suffers from the heat and failed to finish the 400 metres 11 minutes 11 seconds (Reuters photo)

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Maddux becomes richest in baseball

ATLANTA (AFP) — Greg Maddux became the highest paid player in baseball history here Sunday, signing a five-year, \$57.5 million contract extension with the Atlanta Braves.

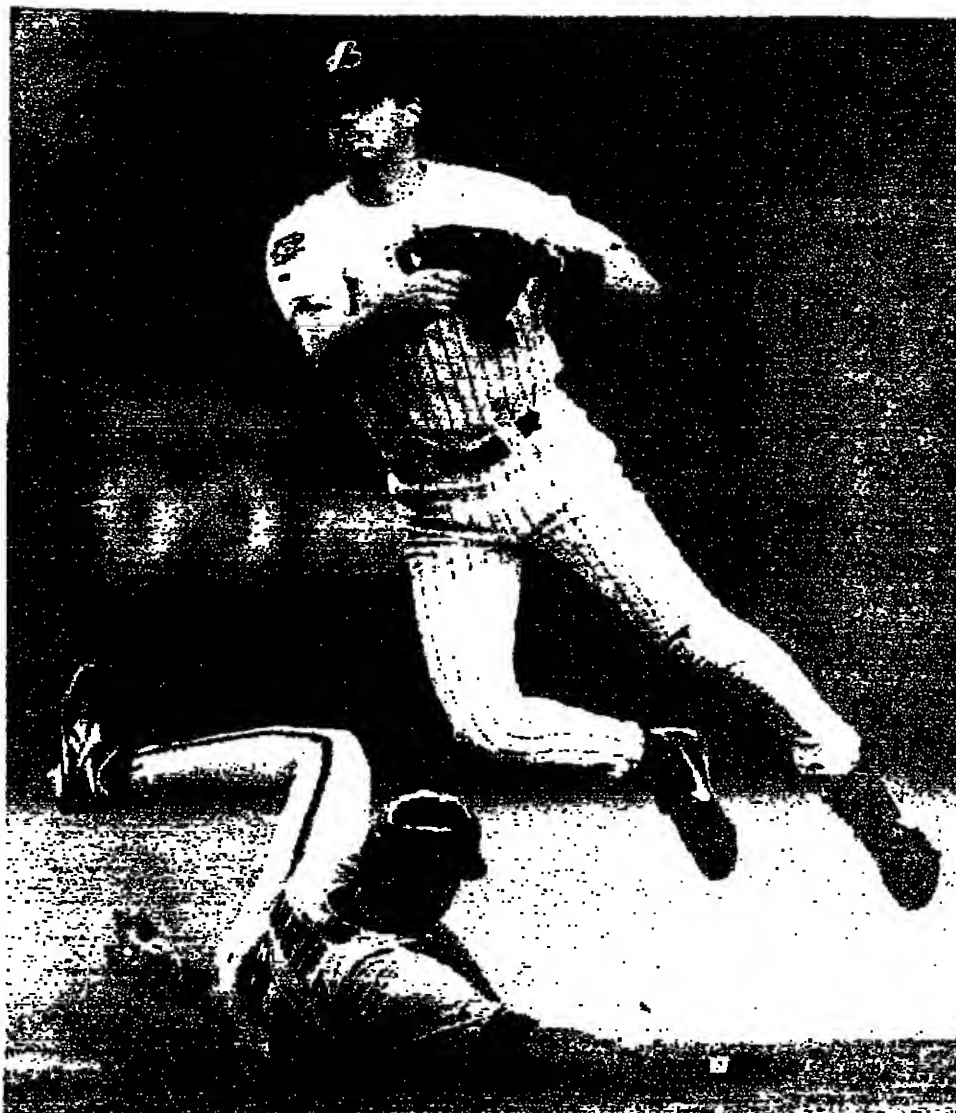
The deal includes a \$3 million signing bonus, \$9 million in 1998, \$10 million in 1999, \$10.5 million in 2000 and \$12.05 million in 2001 and 2002.

All of the money is guaranteed and the yearly average, \$11.5 million, eclipses packages paid to outfielders Albert Belle of the Chicago White Sox and Barry Bonds of San Francisco earlier this year.

Maddux was named the National League's top pitcher in 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995. He is 15-3 with a 2.36 earned-run average, five complete games and two shutouts in 24 starts this season.

"I love playing for Bobby (Cox) and the other coaches," said Maddux, who would have been eligible for free agency after the season. "I'm very happy here and they made me a nice deal and I'd be a fool not to take it. The length of the contract was very important for me."

The reigning National League champion Braves have their vaunted starting rotation of Maddux, Denny Neagle, John Smoltz and



Montreal Expos shortstop Mark Grudzielanek leaps over San Francisco Giants Rich Aurilla to throw Bill Mueller out at first completing the twelfth inning double play at Olympic Stadium in Montreal. The Giants went on to beat the Expos 6-3 in twelve innings (Reuters photo)

Tom Glavine all signed through at least 2000.

Smoltz, named the National League's top pitcher last year, re-signed last November for \$31 million over four years.

Glavine, the 1991 top NL pitcher, signed a four-year

deal for \$42 million in May.

"The strength of our club has historically been our pitching staff," said Braves Vice-President John Schuerholz. "The moves we made were designed to keep our start-

ing pitching staff intact."

Maddux, 31, went 19-2 with a 1.63 era in 1995. He has won his past eight decisions this year and owns a 180-107 career record that includes 80 complete games and 23 shutouts.

Pioneer of Arab sports dies at 90

CAIRO (AFP) — A pioneer of Egyptian and Arab sports, Ahmad Demardash Tuni, died here Monday at the age of 90, the news agency MENA reported.

Tuni was renowned for organising the first ever Mediterranean Games in Alexandria in 1951 and also set up the first Pan-Arab Games in the Mediterranean port city two years later.

Tuni, a member of Egypt's Olympic Committee, was a former national champion in gymnastics, diving and track and field events, MENA said.

He held the Egyptian high jump record in 1929 and was the undefeated title holder in gymnastics from 1926 until 1936. He also picked up awards in England in 1938 and 1939 while he was a university student in Manchester.

Seles returns to the winner's circle

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Former World No. 1 Monica Seles captured her first title of 1997 here on Sunday, rallying from one set down to beat Lindsay Davenport in the final of the \$450,000 WTA Tour tournament.

Seles fought off a match point in the 10th game of the second set, crushing a forehand return off Davenport's second serve and going on to take the set and the match 5-7, 7-5, 6-4.

A forehand return off another second serve gave Seles triple match point in the 10th game of the final set.

Davenport then knocked a forehand wide as Seles claimed the 39th singles title of her career and her first since the 1996 Nichirei international.

"To really pull it off feels great," said Seles, whose four runner-up finishes this year included the previous week's tournament at San Diego.

The 23-year-old Yugoslav-born American is still trying to get back to the pinnacle of women's tennis in the wake of a 1993 stabbing.

But she has struggled with injuries and illness in her family since she returned to competition in 1995 — 27 months after she was stabbed during a tournament in Germany.

She won the Australian Open in 1996 — adding it to the eight Grand Slam titles she claimed before the stabbing — but suffered a debilitating left shoulder injury in the

process. The shoulder injury was followed by a knee problem and, earlier this year, a broken finger. She has also been concerned about her father and coach Karol, who is battling cancer.

"I'm happy for her," Davenport said. "After everything she's been through, look at what a fighter she is, what a great champion she is."

Davenport, who handed World No. 1 Martina Hingis only her second defeat of the season in the semifinals on Saturday, said it was Seles' aggression that made the difference.

Even after Seles dropped her serve to trail 2-3 in the third, she stayed aggressive, and finally Davenport gave her the opening she needed.

Seles broke for 4-4, closed out her next service game with her 12th ace of the match, then broke Davenport to love for the championship.

She said her comeback in the second set was "pure luck" but she was delighted with her performance in the third.

"I felt I was really fighting throughout the match, even when I was down those breaks," she said. "For me the key is going to be consistency. I can feel I've been improving as the weeks go on. I've got a lot of hard work ahead of me but as long as I love tennis it's worth it."

Sampras storms to 49th career win

MASON, Ohio (AFP) — World No. 1 Pete Sampras levelled with Boris Becker for the winningest active player in tennis here Sunday, beating Austria's Thomas Muster 6-3, 6-4 to win the \$2.3 million ATP Championship.

The 70-minute triumph gave Sampras 49 career titles, the same as Germany's Becker, who won three titles in 1996 but has none in an injury-plagued 1997.

The American improved to 8-1 against fifth seed Muster, who reached No. 1 in early 1996.

"I'm very pleased," said Sampras, who collected \$337,000.

"I've played so well all week. It was a great match. Thomas is such a tough competitor, I had to be really focused. I had to play at a high level."

Sampras said he is confident entering next week's event in Indianapolis and

with the U.S. open starting in a fortnight.

Sampras started well, breaking in the second game and serving to love for 3-0. Muster finally got untracked just 18 hours after winning a three-set struggle with Michael Chang to hold for 1-3.

A Sampras drop shot moved the top seed into 4-1 command in grim, overcast conditions but the 29-year-old Austrian got the break back with a full-swinging backhand pass for 3-4.

The American returned the favour with a break of his own to move into set-winning position, 5-3. Sampras served out the set in 33 minutes with an ace after producing 17 winners to just three for the Austrian.

The Austrian saved a break point, the result of a loose backhand, in the third game for 2-1. Sampras broke for 4-3 as Muster netted a backhand after conceding a point in the previous game in a

display of sportsmanship.

But Sampras broke again to reach 4-3. Three games later, he needed all three match points to take the win after Muster produced a return winner on the first and the American volleyed into the net on the second.

Sampras served 11 aces without a double fault and won 82 per cent of his first-serve points. The American won three of five break point chances against Muster, who has won two titles this year on hardcourt.

On current form, Sampras appears to be all but unbeatable.

"If I'm playing well, the game becomes pretty easy for me," he said. "But if I'm not, that's when guys are going to beat me. Being No. 1, when you have to come out and play. You feel the concentration is a little off."

Muster lamented his marathon semifinal with

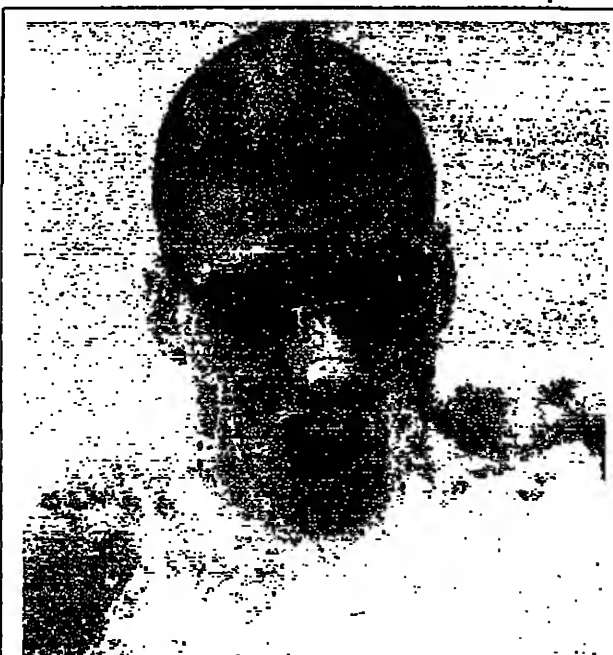
Chang and wearing action earlier in the week.

"He has not lost a match all week," Muster said. "They've not been easy but they were not so long. I had two tough matches. You feel that a little bit and you are not as sharp. I could have put a little more pressure on him during my service games."

Sampras will be top seed next week in Indianapolis, his usual tuneup before taking a week off prior to the start of the U.S. Open.

"I haven't played a bad match in a couple of months," he said. "I took time off after Wimbledon, which is exactly what I needed. It was a long layoff and you never know how you are going to play afterwards."

"But I love coming back to the hardcourts. Things have clicked for me. I'm playing well and the other guys know it."



Men's 400m individual medley world record holder and Olympic champion Tom Dolan of the United States swims at the Pan-Pacific Swimming Championships in Fukuoka. Dolan suffered an asthma attack during the heat and failed to advance to the final with a time of four minutes 11 seconds, 15th time in the heats (Reuters photo)

Woodbridge and Woodforde close in on record

PARIS (AFP) — Australians Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde are now the third most successful doubles pair of all-time.

Woodbridge and Woodforde beat their compatriots Mark Philippoussis and Pat Rafter 7-6 (8/6), 4-6, 6-4 in Sunday's final of the ATP Tour tournament in Cincinnati, Ohio, to seal their 45th career title.

John McEnroe and Peter Fleming of the United States hold the record for the most doubles titles — 57 — along with South African duo Bob Hewitt and Frew McMillan.

Sunday's victory by "the Woodies" lifted them out of a tie for third place on the all-time list with Spaniards Sergio Casal and Emilio Sanchez, who have 44 tournament wins.

"A few years ago we really didn't think a record like that was attainable, but now we've kind of got it in our sights it's something we can aim for," Woodbridge said.

Woodbridge and Woodforde, who are the top seeds in the doubles this week in Indianapolis, have a 45-8 record in finals.

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Foot pain plagues Pippen plans

CHICAGO (AFP) — Scottie Pippen remains hampered by an injured left foot and worries he might not be able to adequately prepare for the Chicago Bulls' approaching National Basketball Association season.

"My foot is not healing," Pippen said. "I'm going to work in the next month to see if it's going to show any progress because it hasn't shown any."

"I'm still dealing with that and from that standpoint, I'm not able to get myself ready to go into next season as of now."

Pippen played through June's NBA finals in pain after injuring his foot in the Eastern Conference finals against the Miami Heat.

The two-time Olympic "Dream Team" forward and perennial NBA All-Star is likely playing his final season with the Bulls.

Pippen's contract expires after next season and the club has said it will not pay him the huge raise he seeks.

They failed in a bid to trade him, in part because Bulls' management does not want to break up a team that has produced two consecutive NBA crowns.

But next season's threepeat bid is all but certain to be the last before the Bulls go into a talent shuffle. The team re-hired coach Phil Jackson for one season but told him it would be his last.

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WEST	Q 9 8 4	Q 7 6 3
EAST	Q 7 6 3	Q 7 6 3
SOUTH	A K J 10	Q 7 6 3

The bidding: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1NT Pass 2NT Pass 3NT Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♠

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FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

Deluxe furnished apartment. Consists of 2 bedrooms, spacious salon, dining room, modern kitchen, 2 sunny terraces, interior, porter, central heating, telephone, satellite, colour TV & video. Location: Jabal Amman Third Circle near French Embassy, Quiet & safe residential area, no water problem.

Call 632755 (9 a.m.-9 p.m.) 669611 (5-9 p.m.)
N.B.: 1x3 bedrooms also available.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Young and dynamic travel company is looking for creative people to fill the following positions:

1. Correspondence and Sales: Duties include corresponding with companies and established clients all over the world. Necessary qualifications are: Good command of written English, computer literacy, ability to deal with foreign companies from different countries and the RIGHT attitude. Females and expatriates residing permanently in Jordan will be given preference.
2. Customer Service & Airport Representative: Duties include assisting clients at airports and interacting with tourists. Necessary qualifications are: Good command of SPOKEN English, willingness to work at unconventional times and a HAPPY personality.

If interested, please send your CV or a short write-up about yourself to:
P.O. Box 840426
Amman 11184

